

RELIGION AND CULTURE SERIES

Joseph Husslein, S.J., Ph.D., General Editor



THROUGH HUNDRED GATES

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THROUGH HUNDRED GATES

BY NOTED CONVERTS FROM
TWENTY-TWO LANDS

Lamping, Severin, father, 1901-

Translation, Arrangement, and Foreword by
SEVERIN and STEPHEN LAMPING, O.F.M.

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To Our
Father and Mother
At Home With God

PREFACE BY THE GENERAL EDITOR

FORTY-ONE important stories of conversions, contributed from all parts of the earth, are offered in this volume. Graphic, straightforward, intensely interesting in their recital, they have been written by men and women who in some way or other have held a place of distinction in the public eye: authors, thinkers, diplomats, teachers, professional workers in various fields, artists, poets, and representatives, too, of the world of sports. Many of the writers are internationally known and their names significant to millions of people.

Racially, we are here admitted into the intimacy of a Pentecostal group, reflecting in a striking way the universality of the Catholic Church: English, Irish, Scotch, North and South American; Danish, Swedish, Norse, German, Hungarian, Spanish, French, and Dutch; Russian, Hindu, Chinese, Japanese, and African, with all the rest of the twenty-two nationalities represented here!

No less interesting than the world-wide representation of the authors is the variety of creeds, cults, and schools of thought out of which by God's inscrutable Providence they found their way into the Church. From Hinduism, Communism, Socialism, they have come to her; from the religions of ancestor worship and idolatry; from agnosticism and freethinking Liberalism; from Jewry as well, and from the many phases of contemporary Protestantism. Out of all the highways and byways of modern thought and speculation they were gathered safely into the one common fold predicted by the prophets and established by Christ in the day that Daniel foretold. And then, peace — the peace of God in their souls!

Preface by the General Editor

Yet all this was not accomplished without vigorous efforts, and not seldom without great sufferings and struggles on their own part. True tales of heroism are the stories told here, that are many and yet one; diversified as the characters and lives of men, different as East from West, and yet bearing silent witness to the fact that there is one thing essential for conversion: the grace of God and man's cooperation with it. So it was when Paul was led into the Church, yet not without his consent and cooperation. So it will be until the last convert finds his way into the same One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, and she becomes eternally a glorified Church with Christ in Heaven.

Finally, be it noted that the documents offered here have been secured by the compilers over an extended period of time. The hands which wrote them have in some instances ceased from labor, while in others the newly written pages were hurried on just in time for translation. This last phase of the work itself called for an unusual body of experts in many languages. For the entire undertaking we are therefore deeply indebted to the zeal and untiring energy displayed in this adventurous and absorbing task by Fathers Severin and Stephen Lamping, O.F.M.

The volume here offered may well be looked upon as a permanent and precious contribution to religious history, a work whose human interest can never fade. But beneath all that has been written are the unspeakable operations of the Spirit of God, hidden and subtile, whose outward manifestations we are privileged to witness in at least some slight degree.

JOSEPH HUSSLEIN, S.J., PH.D.,
General Editor, Religion and Culture Series

St. Louis University,
September 12, 1939

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Hide me, mother! my fathers belong'd to the church
of old,
I am driven by storm and sin and death to the
ancient fold,
I cling to the Catholic Cross once more, to the Faith
that saves.
My brain is full of the crash of wrecks, and the
roar of waves.

— From *The Wreck* by Alfred Lord Tennyson.

FOREWORD: PRESENT-DAY TRENDS AND RECENT CONVERSIONS

AIMLESSNESS and superficiality, coupled with indifference in fundamental issues, are the predominant traits of modern humanity. While the ingenuity of man has achieved astounding results in the field of science and invention, his deficiency in the spiritual realm is calamitous beyond dispute. What a sad spectacle does not modern man present when he poses as a rational being and lays claim to an education without ever having seriously attempted to answer the paramount question of man's ultimate destiny! Millions living in blissful ignorance of their final goal must, upon inquiry, join in that candid but mortifying reply: "I do not know where I am going, but I am on my way."

Others again, to whom religion once gave a definite answer to life, have been browbeaten into relinquishing their Faith by writers and lecturers whose method it is to stress their own intellectual and cultural superiority. A critical analysis of the technique employed by such propagandists in the press and on the platform not seldom reveals an inclination to use certain stock phrases and epithets calculated to distort the judgment of their readers or hearers. Illustrations of this method are given by Mr. John Coyne in an article contributed to the *American Ecclesiastical Review*.¹ As pertinent examples we may cite: "scientists tell us," "that able historian Professor B. declares," "Christian mythology," "medieval superstition," "traditional morality," "dogmatic fabrications," and the like. This approach is tantamount to intellectual

¹ February, 1938.

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intimidation of the unsuspecting reader. Its frequent recurrence begets vacillation in timid minds insufficiently trained in their religion, and ultimately leads them to discard their Faith altogether — not as a result of logical deductions, but merely for fear of being classified as “out-moded religious reactionaries.”

Another source of confusion is the multiplicity of religious sects, cropping up like mushrooms, each claiming to embody the pure form of Christianity in spite of the most glaring contradictions. Thus today we have communities in the United States of not more than eight hundred persons who are divided into no fewer than eight different denominations. Nothing except the lack of independent thinking prevents this state of affairs from causing even more misgivings on the part of the faithful.

In reply to a question concerning a certain individual's religious affiliation Jonathan Swift in his *Polite Conversations* makes one of his characters answer: “Why, he is an Anythingarian.” The remark applies equally to countless individuals of our own day. Millions of worshipers are perfectly satisfied to continue with no more definite concepts as long as no demands are made on their reasoning faculties.

Lastly, for non-Catholics who may entertain doubts as to their religious conviction, the reassuring formula has been invented that “One religion is as good as another.” Those who take this view nowadays — and their number is legion — hold that religion is a matter of tradition, choice, taste, sentiment. Men, they maintain, may exercise their liberty in choosing it, as they do in the choice of the food they eat and the clothes they wear. Favorite modern shibboleths are: “It does not matter what one believes, but what one does is of sole importance,” or “The brotherhood of man stands above every creed.” These sayings, in fact, constitute the most widespread and insidious heresy of our age. So-called liberalism,

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latitudinarianism, or "broadmindedness in religion" has driven more people out of the Protestant church and prevented more from joining the Catholic Church than anything else in the world. It has delivered millions of churchgoers over to indifferentism and finally to unbelief.

As long as men are satisfied that all religions are equal in the sight of God there is faint hope of their seeking after one which will bind their intellect to definite doctrines and burden their will with difficult obligations. Hence, we find that non-Catholics who embrace the Catholic Faith generally follow a stricter form of religion than the majority of their co-religionists. When such Protestants find themselves unhinged in their belief and seriously in doubt as to its tenability, they inquire, read, and pray. They are ready even to put themselves to all necessary inconveniences in their anxious search after truth.

On the other hand, the man who enjoys unruffled peace in the world's wide and easy creed of indifferentism is not likely to trouble himself by pondering the claims of a Church which exacts a stern, unchanging faith in her doctrine, and is constantly enforcing the strict fulfillment of her precept. Certainly, "broadmindedness in religion" is not the product of a keen intellect. All great thinkers, on the contrary, held such a teaching out of harmony with any serious mind.

Long before John Henry Newman renounced Anglicanism, he condemned this same fallacy in the most emphatic terms. Indeed, as early as 1838 he foresaw the spiritual havoc which indifferentism or liberalism in religion would create in the study of the Gospel, and pointed out the gulf of unbelief to which it would inevitably lead. He felt that those whose duty it was to oppose the tide of unbelief must use all their energies to stem the torrent of indifferentism. This he considered but a process of transition into ultimate infidelity. He realized

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that it would be impossible to lay the foundation of definite religion in the souls of men without first clearing away the drift sands left by indifferentism.

There is another way in which the leader of the Oxford Movement² phrased this thought: "You cannot build in the aboriginal forest," he said, "till you have felled the trees." As time went on he became more emphatic in denouncing the spirit of liberalism in religion. On the occasion of his elevation to the Cardinalate, he once more squarely faced this important issue. In the presence of the Pope, Newman summed up the reasons for his uncompromising attitude in the matter. His pronouncements are still of utmost moment in our day. Having thanked the Pontiff for the great honor conferred upon him, he continued:

"And I rejoice to say, to one great mischief I have from the first opposed myself. For thirty, forty, fifty years I have resisted to the best of my power the spirit of liberalism in religion. Never did the Holy Church need champions against it more sorely than now, when, alas! it is an error overspreading as a snare the whole world. And on this great occasion, when it is natural for one who is in my place to look out upon the world and upon the Holy Church as it is, and upon her future, it will not, I hope, be considered out of place if I renew the protest against it which I have so often made. Liberalism in religion is the doctrine that there is no positive truth in religion, but that one creed is as good as another; and this is the teaching which is gaining substance and force daily. It is inconsistent with the recognition of any religion as true. It teaches that all are to be tolerated, as all are matters of opinion. Revealed religion is not a truth, but a sentiment and a taste; not an objective fact — not miraculous; and it

² The Oxford Movement, whose chief exponent is John Henry Newman, is not to be confounded with a movement by the same name founded by Dr. Frank Buchman for the revival of Protestantism.

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is the right of each individual to make it say just what strikes his fancy."

Sound logic should warn us of the dangerous fallacies lurking beneath such misappropriated terms as "liberalism in religion." We should easily be able to apprehend the absurdities to which they must inevitably lead. If all religions are equally true it follows that any self-appointed and self-anointed founder of religion is equal to Christ and even greater than He. Indeed, the assumption, for instance, that Luther founded the true church implies that Christ's attempt at it was a failure. Doubtless, many founders of religions carried over good and noble ideas into separate religious organizations of their own. They were right in some ideas, but wrong in the separation for which they were responsible. Religious individualism, so far as it approves all forms of religion, has neither the sanction of God nor of His revelation.

Christ Himself was intolerant, in the dogmatical sense of the word, as can be proven by every page of Sacred Scripture. "Never," says Cardinal Wiseman, "were men more slightly separated from the acknowledged truth than were the Samaritans in the time of our Lord. . . . Slight as were the dissenting principles of those sectarians, amiable and charitable as may have been their characters, ripe as they were for Christianity, affable and conciliating as the interview (with the Samaritan woman) had hitherto been, no sooner is this important question put, than He makes no allowance, no compromise, but answers clearly and solemnly: 'Salvation is of the Jews.' . . . Thus did this benign and charitable Saviour, who came to seek and save what was lost, and whose first principle it was: 'I will have mercy and not sacrifice' — thus did He hesitate not a moment to pronounce, in the clearest terms, that no deviation from the true religion, however trivial, can be justified or excused in His sight."³

³ *Lectures on the Catholic Church.*

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Consequently, the advocates of religious tolerance can hardly plead their cause by appealing to Christ or Christian charity. God is Charity, but He also is Truth. It is impossible to live up to the commandment of charity and at the same time to hide or obscure the truth. The well-known convert writer, William Faber, expresses himself very succinctly on this point:

"The spurious charity of modern times has stolen more converts from the Church than any other cause. While it has deadened the zeal of the missionary, it has fortified the misbeliever in his darkness and untruth, and stunted or retarded in the convert that lively appreciation of the values of the gift of faith, upon which it would appear that his spiritual advancement exclusively depends. . . . The whole truth, even when preached urgently and with forwardness, is a more converting thing than half the truth preached winningly, or an error condescended to out of anxiety of mistaken love."⁴

There is truth in all religions, but the full truth exists in one only, and so, according to God's plan, the certified way to eternal salvation can be one only. Call this intolerance, if you wish, but a religion which is not intolerant in its teachings is merely an opinion, or else a philosophy at most. Usually the suave term "religious tolerance" is employed as a means to beguile the ignorant. The majority of people who consider themselves tolerant are merely indifferent. They would prefer to reduce all religions to a nondescript quality, thereby undermining them all. To be sure, frictions resulting from religious differences might be reduced among people professing a spineless creed. "If we could all agree to be atheists," quoth the Irishman, "we could all live peaceably together as Christians." Peace at the price of truth!

In consequence of this prevalent confusion, this *tohu bohu* in fundamental issues, the world is facing a di-

⁴ *Creator and Creature.*

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lemma fraught with ominous forebodings of disaster. At no time in its history, perhaps, has a new orientation been more imperative. All who still retain a sense of objectivity realize more and more that our spiritual life cannot be built on the quicksand of contradictory human opinion but must stand firm on the granite of unswerving dogmas. Any spiritual structure will be doomed to destruction if it lacks the rock foundation of unshaken basic truths.

The realization of this fact has brought many out of the darkest regions of unbelief, heresy, and skepticism, back to the true Church, "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). There is no religion which can boast of so many and of such outstanding converts as the Catholic religion. Statistics, we admit, can often be variously interpreted. But if non-Catholics embrace the Faith only after mature study and investigation, this in itself constitutes a powerful apology of Catholic doctrine. Their avenues of approach may differ, but the underlying impulse, apart from God's grace, is usually the yearning after truth, redemption, and security.

The number of converts to the Catholic Faith in the United States amounts to about 50,000 annually. To list only the more prominent of them would, therefore, in itself be quite an undertaking. The fact that not only well-educated lay people of all walks of life, but also many Protestant ministers of various denominations are returning to the Church is symptomatic of the failure of Protestantism. "It is estimated," says *The Lamp* of December, 1934, "that of 3,000 converts made in America over a recent period, 327 were Protestant clergymen; 115 were doctors; 126 lawyers; 45 members or former members of Congress; 12 governors or former governors of States; 180 army and navy officers; 206 authors, musicians and persons of cultural prominence." Incidentally, the Most Reverend Bishop Duane G. Hunt, of Salt Lake City, a former Methodist, was the twelfth convert

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elevated to the Episcopal dignity in the United States.

England has an average of from eleven to twelve thousand converts each year. The past years indicated a record number, however, for causes not yet investigated, the year 1937 showed a drop of about 1,000. Since the death of the greatest convert from Anglicanism, Cardinal John Henry Newman († 1890), more than 900 Protestant clergymen of England returned to the Mother Church, and in the whole world no less than 3,000 Protestant ministers resigned their pastorates and became laymen. A recent English convert, Mr. Burges-Bayly, has compiled a list of these convert clergymen with all pertinent data. Conversions among the intellectuals are in fact, most frequent. Mr. Francis Sheed, the English writer and publisher, is authority for the statement that twelve out of thirteen outstanding literary men in England today are Catholic, and all converts to the Catholic Faith.

Even in Germany, the birthplace of Protestantism, the convert movement has made great headway, especially after the World War. Before the advent of Nazism the Church averaged from ten to eleven thousand converts annually in that country. Among prominent German converts we may name the philosophers and writers Theodor Haecker and Rev. Helmut Fahsel; Benedict Momme Nissen, O.P.; Dr. Expedit Schmidt, O.F.M.; Willibrord Verkade, O.S.B.; Dr. Erik Peterson of the University of Bonn, who was considered among Protestants their foremost theologian of the day; Dr. Karl Thieme, likewise theologian and writer of prominence; the novelist and poetess Gertrud von Le Fort and the poetess-artist, Ruth Schaumann, not to mention countless others. A long list of earlier and also of recent German converts is to be found in *Die Kulturkraft des Katholizismus*, by Dr. Hans Rost.⁵ Similar compilations could be made regarding other nations.

⁵ Second edition, Paderborn, 1930, pp. 411-418.

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Among the best-known converts of this century we may here recall the United States Admiral, Shephard Benson; the brilliant English writer, Gilbert Keith Chesterton; Queen Astrid of the Belgians; the Russian Prince Alexander Wolkonsky; the Norwegian novelist and winner of the Nobel prize, Sigrid Undset; the French writer and ambassador, Paul Claudel; the Italian writer and founder of the Catholic University of Milan, Agostino Gemelli, O.F.M.; Archbishop Mar Ivanios of India; the Japanese Admiral Shinjiro Yamamoto; the former Prime Minister of China, Dom Pierre Célestin Lou Tseng-Tsiang, O.S.B.

One cannot fail to admire the transparent honesty of these modern seekers after God who often struggled for years to dissipate the darkness of uncertainty until finally they arrived, not at the twilight of probability, but at the bright light of certainty and truth.

Those acquainted with convert literature are familiar with the great personal sacrifices a conversion often entails: prolonged mental anguish, social ostracism, and even occasionally the loss of the means of sustenance.

The greatest minds, like Augustine and Newman, realized more than others what a conversion involved. That Newman foresaw what the contemplated step would cost him is apparent in a letter he wrote to his sister on March 15, 1845:

"I have a good name with many: I am deliberately sacrificing it. I have a bad name with more: I am fulfilling all their worst wishes, and giving them their most coveted triumph. I am distressing all I love, unsettling all I have instructed or aided. I am going to those whom I do not know, and of whom I expect very little. I am making myself an outcast, and that at my age — oh! what can it be but stern necessity which causes this?"⁶

Similar experiences have been the lot of other converts. Dr. Erik Peterson of the University of Bonn, Germany,

⁶ *Letters and Correspondence of J. H. Newman*, Vol. II.

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addressed the following words to his friend, Karl Barth, after his conversion:

"I am now forty years old. I have renounced my family, my profession and social standing. I have studied theology circumspectly for twenty years. My action was prompted by my conscience, that I might not be a castaway of God. Whosoever judges me, let him know, that I shall appeal against his judgement to the judgement seat of God."⁷

The qualitative gain of the Church, however, does not numerically outweigh her quantitative loss during the trying postwar years. In fact the leakage during the past decades must not be minimized. The unwholesome influence of Rationalism and Materialism, the decline of spiritual values after the World War, the social insecurity of the masses, the satanic propaganda of Communism and National Socialism greatly augmented the number of renegades from the Church. Nevertheless, this wholesale defection is in no sense an invalidation of Catholicism. We must bear in mind that a defection from the Church does not entail the mobilization of the spiritual and moral forces of man as its counterpart the conversion to the Church. Impartial study and zeal for the cause of God may lead a man out of Protestantism, but never out of Catholicism.

Nor is truth always with the masses. It is indeed very questionable whether the majority of those who turned their back on the Church were at all capable of forming an independent opinion regarding the true nature of Christianity and the Church. At all events it is noteworthy that thousands renew their religious affiliations under changed circumstances or in the hour of need. No one ever apostatized on his deathbed, but countless individuals have returned to their faith in the hour of death. All this proves that every defection in religion is not a positive indication of definite failure in faith. Ignorance

⁷ *Theologische Blätter*, 1931, Nr. 2.

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in matters of faith or the unwillingness to live up to its tenets is more frequently the cause of apostasy than all charges brought against the Church.

Even among the so-called *intelligentsia* ignorance in matters of religion is frequently appalling. Many are not only incapable of defending their faith intelligently, but also lack the knowledge necessary to counteract the false philosophies and theories detrimental to their faith. Those, however, who nineteen hundred years after the birth of Christ boast of being pagans or atheists desecrate the memory of the pagans of old, for these recognized at least a Supreme Being. A comparison with them would not be to the advantage of our modern pagans. "Paganism of old," writes Sigrid Undset in her *Essays Etapper*, "was a lyric poem to God who concealed Himself from man, an attempt of man to ingratiate himself with the Deity, whilst modern paganism is a declaration of war against God, who has revealed Himself."

One method of extenuating the spiritual conquests of the Church consists in speaking of the "machinations of the Church," of "Rome's lust for power," etc., as if this explained the standing miracle of the Catholic Church. Through what machinations or subterfuge were the 8,000,000⁸ pagans converted to the faith under the reign of Pope Pius XI, or the converts with whom this book deals? To all unbiased thinkers the Church always was and will be a world-historic revelation of God's grace and power. Thousands of modern people, whose intellectual honesty cannot be questioned, have found in her the concept of a living Church, witnessed to in the past by the Councils of Nicea, Ephesus, and Chalcedon, and witnessed to at present by her houses of worship, schools, and monasteries in all parts of the world.

She existed before she was actually universal in a

⁸ The October issue, 1938, of the *Union Missionnaire du Clergé de France* states that 6,000,000 pagans were converted in ten years.

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geographical sense, but could not exist without innate potentiality of universality. This does not imply that the Church must necessarily excel in numbers and vastness of territory. Her oneness of thought, including permanently so many people of different times, of different climes, of different tongues, of different character in one and the same faith, constitutes her spiritual universality, of which visible universality is but the external manifestation. However small the numbers to which apostasy might reduce her, however narrow the limits within which persecution may confine her, there will always shine on her brow that star which proclaims that she is the Church of all times and of all nations.

The objection has been made: If the claims of the Catholic Church are so self-evident, if she is divinely instituted, why is it that not all non-Catholics flock to her bosom? The answer is: because passion, prejudice, and ignorance prevent men from doing so. Anyone having but a superficial knowledge of Protestant literature and non-Catholic mentality is shocked by the prevalence of prejudice and ignorance regarding Catholic teachings and practices. It is almost incredible with what persistency the most absurd views and rumors live on among the non-Catholic population. Amusing examples of such distorted views may be found in the excellent book *Alias Oves Habeo*, by Ambrose Reger, O.S.B.⁹ Attention need but be called to the chapters "Bigotry and Ignorance," "Bigotry and Malice." What is said here of the United States applies equally to other countries.

No greater exposé of the existence in English letters of a virulent anti-Catholic tradition exists than that which John Henry Newman gave as early as 1851, when he published his *Lectures on the Present Position of Catholics in England*. Spurred on by hatred and fear rather than by the spirit of fairmindedness, the English govern-

⁹ New York: Pustet, 1928.

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ment, from the time of James I and Elizabeth, carried on in all its territories, for more than two centuries, an unrelenting campaign of propaganda against the Church. Aided by all the Protestant sects, it suppressed every attempt on the part of the Church to secure a fair hearing.

In Colonial America the various Protestant sects, while spreading the doctrines of "toleration," used the weapons of pulpit and press to secure anti-Catholic legislation, and to promote an adverse public opinion, so intolerable, so tainted with bigotry, that a century and a half under the United States' Constitution has not eradicated it. A summary of the causes of this bigotry as well as of its effects in Colonial America, based on original sources preserved in the libraries throughout the United States, is given in the book *American Opinion of Roman Catholicism in the Eighteenth Century*, by Sister Mary Augustina Ray, B.V.M., Ph.D.¹⁰ The open-minded reader of this book will certainly agree with the authoress that, "given such opinions with such derivations, the wonder is not that the Roman Catholics have been the subject of Religious discriminations, but that these have been removed as quickly and as completely as they have."

The second great hindrance in the conversion of non-Catholics is the bad example of lukewarm and renegade Catholics. Comparatively few people are able to find a plausible explanation for the glaring discrepancy existing between the lives of defaulting Catholics and the lofty teachings of the Church. They argue that the lives of such people disprove the claims of the Church without realizing that membership in the Church does not automatically bring about a certain degree of virtuousness and impeccability. Still it remains a deplorable fact, especially in its effect upon non-Catholics, that "men will wrangle for religion; write for it; fight for it; die for it; anything

¹⁰ New York: Columbia University Press, 1937.

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but — live for it.”¹¹ Not that good Catholics are scarce. No, they are indeed as plentiful as ever, but outsiders are always more inclined to judge the Church by her bad members than by her good ones.

The autobiographies of modern converts of both sexes which are included in this volume have been contributed to it from all parts of the world. Twenty-two different nations are represented. Some of the writers are converts in a broader sense of the word, inasmuch as they were baptized Catholics and strayed away into unbelief, from whence they returned to the faith of their youth. The unpretentious contributions are as a whole devoid both of logic chopping and emotional excitement. Most of the converts who contributed to this series did so only very reluctantly. They finally consented in order to give praise to God and be of assistance to those groping for the truth, mindful of the words of Holy Writ: “It is good to hide the secret of a king; but honorable to reveal and confess the works of God” (Tob. 12:7). To all of them we extend our heartfelt thanks for making this volume possible.

Naturally, all contributions which might have been of interest to the public could not be incorporated here. In the first place it was impossible to contact every distinguished convert; secondly, not all were willing to write; and thirdly, not all desirable contributions could be accepted without making the volume too bulky. These facts, therefore, may serve to anticipate the objection that any particular convert ought not to have been omitted. It is important, also, to state that with few exceptions all contributors are still living at the publication of this book.

The inclusion of stories from members of any and all races that could be represented here will not be objected to by true Christians. “For you are all the children of God by faith, in Christ Jesus,” St. Paul wrote to the Galatians.

¹¹ C. C. Colton in *Lacon*, Vol. I.

Foreword

"For as many of you as have been baptized in Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus" (3:26).

From the *Apologia pro Vita Sua*,¹² by John Henry Newman, on to the publication by John Moody of *My Long Road Home*,¹³ countless books and articles written by or about converts have appeared in many countries. We need but mention the German compilation by D. A. Rosenthal, *Konvertitenbilder aus dem 19ten Jahrhundert*,¹⁴ and the more recent German work by Adrian Werburg, *Ihre Wege nach Rom*.¹⁵ In addition we have the bimonthly, *Die Friedensstadt*, Paderborn, and the Viennese monthly, *Der Eucharistische Voelkerbund*, both of which periodicals are working for a reunion in faith. Articles dealing with converts have also been published in the Vatican newspaper *Osservatore Romano*,¹⁶ in the Spanish newspapers *El Debate* and *El Siglo Futuro*, both of Madrid; in the two French collections, *Les Temoins du Renouveau Catholique* and *Les Temoignage des Apostats*, both published at Paris; in the Dutch periodicals *Het Schild* of 's Hertogenbosch and in the *Apologetisch Leven* of Driebergen. Further, we may add the Norse weekly *Nordisk Ugeblad for Katolske Kristne*, Denmark; *The Universe* and *The Catholic Herald*, both of London; *The Commonweal*, *America*, *The Epistle*, all of New York; *The Lamp* of Peekskill, New York, and the *Voice of the Church*, Lisle, Illinois.

A collection of short autobiographies of Jewish converts alone, under the title *Why Jews Become Catholics*, was published at New York in 1924.

Finally, compilations similar to the present have been

¹² London, 1865.

¹³ New York, 1933.

¹⁴ Regensburg, 1889, 1892, 1902.

¹⁵ Paderborn, 1929.

¹⁶ Città del Vaticano.

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published in other countries; namely, *Conversions to the Catholic Church*,¹⁷ *Menschen, die zur Kirche kamen*,¹⁸ and *De Sokte de Gamle Stier*.¹⁹ Of the last-mentioned three volumes only the second, by Severin Lamping, O.F.M., deals with forty-two modern converts of twenty-one different nationalities. Of these accounts thirty-three are identical with the contributions to the present volume.

The narratives contained in the book now offered here are rendered unabridged, and in the case of foreign contribution, in literal renditions, plain and straightforward as the originals. The attempt to interpret the individual contributions is left to the reader. May they speak for themselves. To all who assisted in making the necessary translations our grateful indebtedness and sincere appreciation are herewith expressed. In this regard a special word of thanks is due to the Right Honorable Countess An̄n zu Stolberg-Wernigerode and to the editor of *St. Ansgar's Bulletin*, Miss Catherine O'Neill. Likewise we wish to make grateful acknowledgment to the publishers Burns, Oates and Washbourne of London, England, for the kind permission to reprint the stories of the Rev. Owen Francis Dudley and Sheila Kaye-Smith from *Conversions to the Catholic Church*.

As a matter of fact the following autobiographies, which rather give us first impressions than the analysis of a religious metamorphosis, are not to be regarded as presenting in themselves a satisfactory explanation of that supernatural phenomenon which we call a conversion. A conversion is more than an intellectual sequence. It is primarily and essentially the work of God's grace, which no man can fathom and much less describe. The convert himself is apt to confuse in retrospect the intellectual and religious, and perhaps even the emotional process through which he has passed, with what has actually hap-

¹⁷ London, 1933.

¹⁸ Munich, 1935.

¹⁹ Oslo, 1936.

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pened. Literary accounts of conversions are, as a rule, interesting pieces of autobiography — and perhaps bad theology. The reader should, therefore, discount to a certain extent the personal element in the following autobiographies inasmuch as it might divert his mind from the wondrous operations of God's grace.

If terms that sound somewhat harsh occur at times in reference to non-Catholic beliefs they should not in any instance be taken as implying a condemnation of sincere non-Catholics. The familiar quotation of St. Cyprian († 258), *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus* — "Outside of the Church there is no salvation,"²⁰ does not imply that according to Catholic teaching all not within the pale of the visible Church will be damned. It merely emphasizes that the Catholic Church, as the living Christ among us, constitutes in its truths and means of grace the one certified way to eternal salvation. A baptized non-Catholic who does not know the Church but complies with his religious obligations according to his lights belongs in a spiritual way to the Church. Indeed, he even partakes in part of her graces in virtue of which he can be saved. Consequently the word of St. Cyprian should not be misunderstood. There are undoubtedly many non-Catholics who rank higher in the sight of God than many Catholics. The Catholic Church, therefore, does not receive converts to the faith like sinners, but like children who have strayed away and are returning to the household. With what solicitude and love the Catholic Church remembers her separated brethren is evident from the encyclicals written by Pope Pius IX in 1854 and in 1863, from the exhortation *Longinqua Oceani*, addressed by Pope Leo XIII to the American hierarchy in the year 1895, and the encyclical *Mortalium Animos* of Pope Pius XI, issued in 1928.

Bigheartedness as well as a sympathetic attitude toward

²⁰ *De Unitate Ecclesiae*.

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non-Catholics ought to be the distinctive mark of all Catholics in the effort to abolish existing obstacles to Christian unity. It is not the Protestants only who have distorted facts. An immense step forward would be taken if Catholics and Protestants alike discarded from their writings whatsoever is unfair, rude, or unkind. Instead of ceaseless recrimination, by which mutual irritation is kept up, we should calmly and loyally appeal to each other for such rectification as truth demands. Moreover, all Catholics should consider it a moral obligation incumbent upon them to work for a reunion in faith, in gratitude for their calling to the true Church.

In a sense all Catholics are "converts." No one is "born" a Catholic, although he may be born of Catholic parents, with a Catholic heritage and environment. He is born, as it were, on the threshold of the Church. If all Catholics realized their responsibility resulting from this preferential position the spiritual plight of their separated brethren would be for them a matter of grave concern. "If there were only one Catholic in the world," writes Monsignor Lavelle in the *St. Anthony Messenger*, March, 1938, "and if he made only one convert a year, and if each convert would do the same, under the laws of geometrical progression every one in the world would be Catholic at the end of thirty-two years."

In spite of a certain prevalent lethargy on the part of Catholics it is safe to say that no one mourns the disunion of Christendom more than the sincere Catholic. Even Adolf von Harnack, the most influential Protestant theologian of his day, once wrote: "I believe it correct to say: the sincere Catholic has a more vivid appreciation of a great Christian community, a keener sorrow in view of the Christian disunity, and a greater sense of responsibility in face of the problems confronting us, than we Protestants."²¹

²¹ *Reden und Aufsätze*, II, Giessen, 1906.

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The desire for religious unity has also become increasingly urgent among Protestants and is testified to in particular by the Protestant World Conferences at Stockholm (1925), Lausanne (1927), and Edinburgh (1937). At the last-mentioned gathering the most significant words of the final declaration, drafted by a committee, are undoubtedly the following: "We humbly acknowledge our divisions are contrary to the will of Christ, and we pray God for unity."

None have sung the praise of their Mother Church more eloquently than the converts to Catholicism. Like a mighty chorus their voices rise from all parts of the globe, uniting in one jubilant hymn of praise at having found their Mother. Ardently they plead for that unity whose preservation Christ Himself asked of His heavenly Father in that memorable hour before His passion: *Ut omnes unum sint*, "That they all may be one" (John 17:21). But though the Church may be a Mother to all who cling to her, yet in her strength she is built on the adamant rock that rises from the surging flood, defying time and all the forces of disintegration. She is and always has been God's bulwark for the salvation of mankind. Only through her can the passing generations find a new orientation and work out most perfectly their temporal and spiritual betterment.

You are like a rock that plunges into eternity, but the generation
of my day is like sand that falls into nothingness.
It is like dust that whirls about itself.
It has raised its blood to be a law of the spirit and the name
of its people to a divinity.
Because of this you lie as a hoar-frost on the forests of its dreams
and like snow on the lofty cedars of its pride.
For you bow not your neck to the yoke men would put upon it,
nor will you lend your voice to their error.
You throw nations down before you that you may save them.
You bid them rise up that they may work their salvation.
See, their boundaries are like a wall of shadow in your sight,
and the roar of their hate is like laughter.

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The clash of their weapons is like tinkling glass and their victories are as tapers in small chambers.

But your victory stretches from morning until evening and your wings spread over every sea.

Your arms enfold men of every color and your breath blows over all generations.

Your boundaries are without boundaries, for you carry in your heart the compassion of the Lord.

— From *Hymns to the Church*, by Gertrud von Le Fort, translated by Margaret Chanler (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1937).



Shubert.

1

AS A LITTLE CHILD

JOHN MOODY

SOMETIMES, when converts are asked to state, in brief, how they came to embrace the Catholic Faith, they have replied, "I became as a little child again." I once gave that reply to a man who asked me to state my reasons "on a post card." It is the right reply; no one can become a Catholic, really, unless he does just that. But what does it mean to "become as a little child again"? To determine its meaning, at least in part, we might reflect a bit on our own childhood days, and try to recall how our child mentality functioned before it had become warped by contact with the world. Let me briefly sketch my own child mentality as, on reflection, it comes back to me.

Above all else, it was tempered by wonder. As a small boy I often wondered at my animated self. How was it possible that my little body could actually be a living, moving thing? Whence came its power? What made it "go"? I would think of my father's watch — a wonderful machine. But my own body-machine beat that, for the watch couldn't start unless someone wound it up, and couldn't keep going unless someone wound it every day. But not so my little body; it was always moving. Moreover, it grew up; grew in size, grew by itself.

How could all this be? What were men and women, boys and girls, anyway? How did they come to be like that? Why were they here? What were they for? And most puzzling of all, why did they live just about so long — fifty, sixty, seventy years or even less — and then die? How

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they started was one great mystery, but why they stopped, never to go again, was a still greater mystery.

At all these puzzling things I wondered and wondered. Nobody could ever seem to clearly explain them. Someone might say, "Your body is animated by your soul; without your soul your body could not move; it would be 'dead.' " But what was my soul, and why and how did it have this effect on my body?

There were even deeper mysteries than these to wonder about. I was not only a moving, self-propelling machine, but a thinking, feeling machine also. I could think, and laugh, and talk, and cry; I could speak the truth, or lie; I could dream and imagine things; I could love and I could hate. And overtopping all these wondrous things about myself, was the fact that I could decide when and how to exercise these powers. The watch, when wound up, had to go on; it couldn't stop and start at its own choosing. But I was a self-starter and a self-stopper; I had a mysterious something called a "will" — which I could always use when I wanted to.

Of course I was told that all these things were "natural"; it was all in accord with the "laws of nature." But what was nature? What, really, were the mind, the heart, the five senses? How did they come to be? Nobody seemed to know, exactly. And so as I lived on, I continued to be confronted by mystery; we were all living in mystery — father, mother, brothers, and sisters — everybody.

Then, as I grew older, I began to lose this sense of wonder. For in the life of every growing child the time is sure to come when modern "enlightenment" appears upon the scene, and begins to intrigue his mind, claiming to solve all mystery for him. This "enlightenment" is often met with in the books he early comes to read. During his childhood he has of course been taught that back of all the wonders of his mind and body, back of all the wonders that surround his life, there dwells a Major

Wonder; a Transcendent Being who is the Creator and Father of us all. This Major Wonder (Almighty God) he has come to strongly believe in, and this belief has kept him sane and balanced during all his early years. Faith in a supernatural purpose and end for man has been the bulwark back of all his striving.

But in time he has left his childhood far behind, with its dreams and visions, its faith and trust. Now he begins to hear, to his dismay, that there is no Major Wonder, no Creator and Father of us all. And if he listens long enough he will learn that he has no soul, no free will, no immortal destiny ahead, and when he dies, that will be the end of him. And so, though reluctantly, perhaps, he may in time decide to take his place in the thronging procession of the "enlightened."

As I read over these last two paragraphs, I realize how exactly they portray my own personal evolution from the simple faith of childhood, to the "enlightenment" of maturity; from the loss of that divine sense of wonder and mystery — to the modern hell of doubt and frustration. And to get away from this hell of doubt and frustration I did indeed have to "become as a little child again" — washing my mind of the incrustations accumulated throughout the years of "enlightenment"; laying aside my foolish notions, prejudices, and false views of life. For only then was it possible for me to find even the starting point of fundamental truth.

In other words, in order to become a Catholic, I had to set aside my much-vaunted worldly wisdom for that higher wisdom, veiled in part in mystery, which is so beautifully reflected in the wonder world of the child mentality. Not by means of emotional "feeling," but by way of the intellect and the will, I had to recover that awareness of mystery, that consciousness of invisible reality — the firm *conviction* that there does exist, in addition to this natural order which we see and feel and touch, an

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unseen and higher world of wonder and of objective truth — the supernatural order.

This, however, is not the full explanation of my conversion to Catholicism; it is only a "post-card answer." But it is a first fundamental for any return to Christianity. Other questions, however, immediately pile up. I am asked, for instance, "Why, in leaving your agnosticism behind, did you jump over Protestantism and choose the Catholic Church, rather than one of the other Christian bodies of the orthodox type?"

The answer to that is easy. Many of these critics freely admit that their own partly self-constituted beliefs are "wobbly and jittery," uncertain and shaky, just as were mine in the old days. Now, after almost a lifetime of holding "wobbly and jittery" notions of truth, I had at last made the discovery that what I was starving for, were not more wish-fancies, as formulated from the views of Tom, Dick, and Harry. What I wanted was some dependable *authority* to guide me to all truth, and correctly interpret it for me. But could such an authority be found? Then I ran across a statement of G. K. Chesterton, in his *Orthodoxy*, published thirty years ago. He said, "Christianity came into the world firstly in order to assert with violence that a man had not only to look inwards, but to look outwards, to behold with astonishment and enthusiasm a Divine Company and a Divine Captain."

From that hour I began to "look outwards." I gave up relying on my inner consciousness; I ceased depending wholly on private judgment. Instead I turned to the storehouse of truth. I had discovered that Truth is One, and is objective, not subjective; and that trying to find it by the "inner light" alone would forever lead to frustration.

To explain more concretely. My whole investigation of the Catholic point of view had been inconclusive and futile until I had definitely begun to seek for the proof

of the infallible authority of the Catholic Church. This at once led me, of course, to an examination of the Catholic Papal question — the Church's claim that she speaks with the infallible authority of Christ. And with what result? Why, of course, I discovered "with astonishment and enthusiasm a Divine Company and a Divine Captain."

Objective facts have always appealed to my more practical side; all my business life has been spent in a place where one's exclusive urge is to secure the facts and get results from them. I have sometimes said it was my Wall Street training that led me into the Catholic Church! And so now, in my accustomed fact-finding way, I dug deeply into the history of the Church; and when I had finished I had discovered the meaning of Catholic Unity, the Oneness of Catholic Truth; the need and the reality of the infallible authority of the Catholic Church.

"I might not be able to believe the Gospel, did not the authority of the Catholic Church move me," said St. Augustine in the fifth century; and a long line of thinkers have been saying the same ever since. At first blush this had looked to me like a "hard saying" — but not so any more. For it is the key to the whole Catholic structure. Without a clear apprehension of the authoritative voice by which the Catholic Church speaks, neither you nor I can really be a Catholic.

Of course I am quite aware that this is disputed by some who profess to be truly "Catholic" in their beliefs — "Anglo-Catholics," for instance. But such people are not living by the Chesterton formula; they are looking inwards and not outwards; they are ignoring the objective facts. It will always be found in such cases that sight has been lost of the fundamental objective foundation on which the Christian Faith forever rests — the Rock of authority — the infallible authority of Christ Himself.

It should be clear to any thinking person who has the slightest understanding of weak human nature, that if

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Christianity had not been erected on this Rock of infallible authority, it would have wholly disappeared from the world as a vital force ages ago; it would only be remembered now as a small, ephemeral sect of primitive times — as are the numerous “mystical cults” of those days. It would have faded away, precisely as it is fading today among those who deny the Divinity of Christ — and thereby deny the infallible authority of His Church.

“Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hell [error within or without] shall not prevail against it.” Losing sight of this Divine pronouncement is losing sight of the Catholic Faith.

NOT FOR MENTAL COWARDS

HIS EXCELLENCY BISHOP DUANE G. HUNT

THE convert to the Catholic religion is often misjudged. The sufficiency of his information about Catholicism is doubted, friends usually fearing that he is doomed later in life to be disappointed. It is thought at times that he is attracted by some appeal which is only superficial. It is thought, too, that in embracing the Catholic religion he makes a humiliating surrender of intellectual independence. That such is not true, I think I can prove from my own case, which is fairly ordinary and typical.

I was born and raised in a good non-Catholic home, my parents being practical and devout Christians. From the very first I was taken to church, to Sunday school, and to various church services. At an early age I was introduced to the Bible and grew up with profound respect for it. In time, I was sent to a Christian college, where at first I continued the religious habits of earlier days.

There came a time, however, when for reasons which would be very hard to state, I found myself becoming critical about religion. I recall sitting back in prayer meetings, with a rather detached attitude, making uncomplimentary observations about the extemporaneous prayers and the testimonies given by my associates. The emotionalism of revival meetings irritated me, as did also the personal work by which Christian students tried to win over their non-Christian fellows. In the scheme of things as it existed, I felt more and more uncomfortable and out of place.

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Before long I was framing very definite questions about religion. What was I to believe? What was I to do? How was I to worship? From what source could I acquire truth? These became burning questions; they absorbed my thoughts and made me unhappy. By my own inquiries, I could learn the truths of science, of history, and of other natural subjects; but it seemed to me that for religious truths I must turn to God. And how could I do so? Eventually I had to work out an analysis of my problem. Starting with my beliefs in the existence of God and that God is the Author of truth, I figured out that there were only three ways in which God might instruct me. First, God might in some mysterious way teach me directly. Second, He might inspire certain chosen men to write a book, through the pages of which He would speak to me. Third, He might appoint a group of men, teach truth to them, and then authorize them to teach me.

Concerning the first way, I could not find the slightest proof that God had revealed truth to me directly. And it seemed unreasonable to expect Him to do so. If God should reveal religious truths directly to me, He would do the same to others. And if He should reveal truth directly to individuals merely in response to their honest petitions, then, He must have done so to millions of devout persons in the various religions throughout the world. But if that were the case, then, God had revealed contradictory doctrines to different persons. This, of course, was wholly absurd.

The second possibility was a book. Instinctively I turned to the Bible, which I had been reared to respect. I had always assumed that it was the word of God. But when I critically examined the subject I became uncertain. In the first place I was aware that there were many different interpretations of the Bible texts. Different Christian denominations drew conflicting doctrines from the same chapter, even from the same verse. Which

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interpretation and which doctrine were correct?

To make matters worse, it wasn't long before I raised the question: How did I know that God had inspired the writers of the Bible? I was told that some of the early Christians decided that it was inspired. But how did they know? Did God tell them?

I was told that if I would only read the Bible devoutly, its inspiration would become evident to me. I followed that advice. There were certain passages of the Bible which I admired greatly, but I certainly could not be sure that they were inspired. How was I to know? What test should I apply? At the same time, there were other passages of the Bible which did not appeal to me at all. Was I to regard the former inspired and the latter not inspired? If so, I would be changing the Bible to suit myself.

The third possibility was that God had appointed certain men as agents to instruct me. Presumably, they would be the ministers of some church. But of what church? And how were they to be identified? Surely, if God had appointed agents, they would be clearly marked so as to be recognized. I knew of no such men. Furthermore, if they were to teach as agents of God, they must be infallible. And where was I to find such men?

The more I pondered over such problems, the more confused I became. It seemed hopeless to try to find God's truth, infallibly taught. Problems had created doubts; doubts were destroying faith. I was surely drifting away from the religion of my youth.

It was in this frame of mind that I was given some books explaining the Catholic religion. I remember clearly the scorn and contempt with which I began to read them. I was so sure that the Catholic religion was wrong that I felt perfectly confident of finding a host of errors and contradictions. In reading the books, however, I discovered that the Catholic Church at least had answers

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to my questions. While I did not take them seriously at first, I noted and remembered them. I remember at one time saying to myself: "It is a shame that the Catholic Church is so terribly bad, because its arguments are so logical."

You see, I had heard so many awful things about the Catholic Church that I was prejudiced. I had been taught to believe that, while the Catholic Church for a few centuries was holy and faithful, she later became corrupt, with bishops and popes falling into terrible scandals. The moment, therefore, that I thought seriously about the Catholic religion I had to weigh such accusations.

As well as I could, I did so. To my great surprise, I found that the accusations against the Church could not be proved. I mention one illustration, as typical of others. A friend gave me a pamphlet in which the author tried to prove that St. Peter was never in Rome. He asserted most confidently, in the light of his argument, that the primary claims of the Catholic Church were false. I read the pamphlet, and then read some Catholic literature on the same subject. I found that the Catholic Church could support her claim by a mass of evidence, from the best of non-Catholic historians. The result was, of course, that I had more respect for the Catholic Church after the incident than I had before. It was precisely the same with every subject I looked into, whether it was criticism of the confessional, of indulgences, of the Knights of Columbus, or Catholic education, or of anything else concerning the Catholic religion.

At one stage in my floundering about I began to doubt the divinity of Christ. And I deliberately magnified that doubt because I wished to keep out of the Catholic Church. That may sound strange to you, but it is true. I assured myself that the Church must be wrong, and that it must have fallen into false doctrines and evil ways. Such being the case, evidently God had not protected the

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Church against failure. But it was only a matter of history that Christ had promised that His Church would not fail. If it had failed, then, Christ had not protected her. He had failed in His promise. If so, obviously, He was not divine, but was only a man, and a fanatical man at that.

In my desire to remain outside the Catholic Church, I was caught in the trap of my own prejudices. If I accepted the charge that the Church had failed, I was doomed to reject the divinity of Christ. If I did that, I was through with Christianity and every Christian church. If so, where could I look for truth? Yet if I accepted the divinity of Christ, I was headed for the Catholic Church.

Sooner or later, I was compelled to study seriously the subject of Christ's divinity. As the result of that study, to make a long story short, I had to admit that the divinity of Christ was demonstrated, and that I could not honestly reject it. And then I was brought up squarely against the Catholic Church again. Christ was divine; He established His Church and guaranteed that it would not fail; from these facts there was no escape; therefore, He had protected His Church against failure. Therefore, His Church was still in the world, teaching truth infallibly. Try as much as I would, I could not close my mind to that conclusion.

To escape from the inevitable, I read the worst books I could find against the Catholic Church, I went most regularly to other churches, I taught in Sunday school, and identified myself with church societies; all with the hope that I could keep myself satisfied and happy outside the Catholic Church.

It was during a postgraduate course in law school that I finally made up my mind that I must be and would be honest with myself, and that since logic led me unmistakably to the Catholic Church, I would follow. I could not be a mental coward. I came into the Catholic Church, therefore, because I could not stay out.

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The Catholic Church fitted in perfectly with my original analysis. Evidently God did not reveal truth to me directly. No doubt He had revealed truth to the writers of the Bible, but so that the reader would not be led into error He had appointed the officials of His Church to interpret the Bible correctly. The officials of the Church were closely marked as the agents of God, because they were the successors of the Apostles, of those men whom Christ had personally appointed to teach infallibly. They were, as I discovered, the bishops of the Catholic Church.

HIS INVISIBLE PRESENCE

AUGUSTINE J. ROTH

THE question how and why I became a Catholic has been asked of me no less than a score of times and, much as I would like to answer it in a brief and simple manner, I am unable to do so. Had I been open-minded in my Protestant days, the answer to this question would be quite simple and probably all that I would mention would be that I was impressed by the devotion of some Catholics of my acquaintance, or that I met a priest or nun who gave me some books on the Catholic Church. However, since I was a bigot of such intensity that I did not number among my acquaintances even one Catholic, I cannot answer the above question without some length.

When I found myself out of harmony with the doctrines of the Baptist church I began an investigation of the doctrines of other non-Catholic churches, which lasted for six years. This investigation was made to determine if any other church contained doctrines to which I could subscribe wholeheartedly. Still, I had not the remotest idea that this investigation would lead me to the Catholic Church, for I hated the Catholic Church so thoroughly that I would have abandoned the inquiry even though it meant staking my salvation and losing what little faith I had left. That I took the step, nevertheless, later on, is a proof for the mysterious working of God's grace in my life, which took me step by step through the emptiness of the other churches and then bestowed upon me the greatest of all gifts, the gift of Faith.

His Invisible Presence

This is the real answer to the question: How I became a Catholic. The answer to the other question, why I became a Catholic, can be summed up in a few words. I became a Catholic because after an extensive investigation lasting six years I found the Catholic Church to be the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. I became a Catholic for the same reason that nearly a half of a million souls became Catholics last year, for no man can know the true Church and feel content to remain outside of her communion.

My own conversion came about in a very unusual manner, and I may call myself, in truth, a convert of the Blessed Sacrament. After six years of searching for food for my soul and trying to revive a faith that was slowly but surely dying, because instead of bread I was given a stone, God drew me to Himself. After six years of wandering through an abysmal darkness of sects and isms, strife and discord, doubts and fears, I had about decided that the search for truth was a hopeless task. It was at this time that I was invited into the Cathedral in Springfield, Illinois, by Father J. A. O'Brien. I had never before in my life set foot inside a Catholic Church; I knew absolutely nothing of the Sacraments or Sacramentals save what was taught to us in our own seminaries, and that was not complimentary to the Blessed Sacrament. But the moment I stepped across the threshold of that Church and stood before the Blessed Sacrament for the first time, I felt within me that I stood in the very presence of Christ. True, I did not know at the time that He was present in the Blessed Sacrament on the Altar, but I did feel the definite assurance that He was present somewhere in that Church, for never before did I feel His nearness to me as in that memorable hour.

I knelt down and prayed. There at the feet of the Master I poured out the burden of my soul, and as I prayed I felt that burden being lifted from me. For the

Augustine J. Roth

first time in many years I felt the joy of a satisfied soul and the peace of mind that comes to one who, after journeying through the wilderness of sects and isms, has at last reached the Father's house.

I asked to be received into the Church right then and there, but naturally that was impossible. The reasoning of the Catholic priest impressed me. After telling me that a period of instruction would be necessary and assuring me that nothing would give him greater joy than to begin immediately, he did impress upon me what a great sacrifice a conversion involved. When I left him that evening he gave me a few books to take home with me. He chose very wisely, for when I arrived home and opened the package I found a short biography of Cardinal Newman.

It seems strange to have to admit that I had no knowledge of the great Newman being a convert. Many times, in my own church, we had sung "Lead Kindly Light," and all I knew of the author was that his name, or her name, was J. H. Newman. At least more was not mentioned in our hymnals. For one thing, I never dreamed that this very song was a prayer for guidance from the heart of one, who like myself, found a great void in his soul that his own church could not satisfy. Among the other books Father O'Brien had given me was also *Rebuilding a Lost Faith* by John L. Stoddard, another convert. Here too I received a jolt, for had any man ever told me that such a book could be written by a convert in appreciation and in defense of his Faith, I would not have believed it. A third book entitled *Where We Got the Bible*, by Graham, convinced me that all my seminary training had been a waste of time, for not until I had read this book did I realize how little I knew about the Bible I had been preaching for over seven years. So carefully are the true facts hidden from men who are studying for the ministry.

So thoroughly engrossed did I become in these books

His Invisible Presence

that I remained awake the entire night reading them. In the morning I told my wife about my visit with the priest, of my experience before the Blessed Sacrament, and of the books that I had read, but she was by no means in sympathy with my attitude. She asked me to go no further, for if I did, it would bring disgrace on the family, and if I did become a Catholic, she would take our baby and return home; that she would never want to see or hear from me again until I came back asking the forgiveness of my people.

I had often heard of people facing a crisis; now I was facing one myself. I realized that if I followed the voice of God in my soul I would certainly lose my wife and child whom I loved dearly, and if I kept them, I would necessarily lose my immortal soul. I then went through the libraries reading all of the non-Catholic books that I could find, hoping against hope that I might find a loophole of escape, but though I read with a passion, I found that every statement made by the priest and by the writers of the books he had given me, could be substantiated by non-Catholic theologians of standing. I then placed my hand into His pierced hand and asked Him to give me the grace of perseverance to follow Him. And He failed me not.

Then came a period of persecution on the part of my relatives and acquaintances such as one can hardly imagine possible in the twentieth century. However, I always found strength in the promises of our Lord.

Without my knowledge my wife, who had left me, wrote to the Sisters with whom I had been living and after about five months she returned to me and I had the great joy of seeing my wife and babe baptized in the same holy Faith. In the meantime, many others, who persecuted me, have been received into the Catholic Church.

I have been in the Church now for over five years and each day finds me more deeply rooted in her holy soil

Augustine J. Roth

than the day before. Here I find a Bible that is untampered with and a glorious tradition, for the Catholic Church has been acting as witness since the day when Christ walked on earth. She was present at the Last Supper, when the Sacrament of Holy Eucharist was instituted; she was present when Christ stood before Pilate; she was present at the crucifixion and again at the resurrection; she was with the first Christians in the Catacombs, in their prisons of shame, in the arenas of torture.

Through nearly two thousand years she has steered a straight and narrow course between the cold and barren peaks of bigotry and prejudice. She has seen nations rise to the peak of power and then fall into decay. Thousands have come forth to hurl their handfuls of sand against the solid rock on which her Divine Founder placed her. Her enemies have flourished for their short season, and like the leaves of the forest they have fallen and withered. She has seen those who persecuted her strut their brief moments and then perish, and she will live on and on as the greatest civilizing force the world has ever known, for she has the promise of Christ: "And behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."

I came and asked for bread, and I was given the Bread of Life. I have the privilege of communing daily with that noble company of saints and martyrs whose blood has been the seed of new Christians. In this company I shall march onward until I reach the goal that is before me. There are no more doubts, no more fears, no more empty meaningless sects. I have found the Father's house.

A RACE WELL RUN

RALPH H. METCALFE

THERE is much satisfaction, I can say, to be derived from winning a sprint race from some of the greatest runners in the world. There is a happy moment when one learns that he has equaled or broken a record. There are pleasures in the fine contacts which can be developed in athletic competition. There are flattering newspaper comments which one naturally likes to read but which, I might say, must be taken with the proverbial grain of salt.

But none of these, none of the glories and honors that have come my way because I happen to have had some success in running, can compare with the pleasurable thrill that was sincerely mine when I realized, for the first time, that I was a Catholic. I have found a new happiness in my religion, an undreamed-of consolation in my prayers. My conversion, very likely, was the most important single act in my whole life and I surely have no regrets.

It may seem odd or unusual to many readers to hear of a Negro convert to the True Church, particularly in the United States. My race, however, is a rich field for domestic missionaries, cultivated more and more, and with increasing success. There has been some splendid work accomplished among my people in the cause of Catholicity. Schools and churches for colored parishioners testify to that fact.

I may say that I had no particularly difficult obstacles

Ralph H. Metcalfe

to overcome in approaching Catholicism. It was not my ill fortune, as it is with all too many converts, to overcome parental and home objections. As a matter of fact, my dear mother was a convert to the Faith before me. Residing in Chicago, Illinois, our home, she had become interested in the Church because she had friends of her own, both white and black, who were of the Faith. She was impressed by their sincerity of purpose, their zealotness, their calmness in travail because of their religion.

It was at that time, while I was yet a high-school student, that I became more than casually interested in the Catholic Church. This fact was one factor that determined my matriculation at Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, because it is a Catholic school directed by the Jesuit Fathers.

My conversion didn't come, as some of my non-Catholic friends have intimated, through undue influence on the part of the Jesuit Fathers. Nor was it the result of urging by my friends on the athletic teams or in classes. Long before enrolling at Marquette, as I have said, I had become interested in the Church and my observations at the university only confirmed many conclusions which I had previously formed.

On a trip with the Marquette track team late in the winter of 1932, I confided my "great idea" to a warm personal friend on the squad. He was enthusiastic in his congratulations and urged immediate instructions. "But I haven't the time now," I protested. "Too much class-work, too much track practice. I want to approach Catholicity with both eyes opened."

But my friend persisted. He passed on the information to the Rev. John P. Markoe, S.J., then director of the men's Sodality at Marquette and a "man's man" in the eye of every Marquette student. So I went to him.

Father Markoe was splendid. I had no misgivings about the step I was taking, but I felt it was a bit tremen-

A Race Well Run

dous. Through private instruction Father Markoe made things comparatively simple. He first showed me why the Catholic Church is the true Church and then instructed me in its beliefs and practices. There were others, too, who took an interest in me. All along the line, not only in religious matters but in scholastic as well, I have found a fine spirit of cooperation between students and faculty members at Marquette. That is one reason why I remained happy and satisfied while at school.

So I was received into the Church, just slightly more than a year ago as these lines are being written. My Confirmation day was a happy one for me, no happier, however, than December 8, 1932, when I was received into the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It has been my good fortune, since, to have been elected treasurer of that organization, an honor from my fellow students, which I duly appreciate.

I attend the Church of St. Benedict the Moor, colored mission, not so far off the Marquette campus. And, more often than not, I am accompanied there by one of my non-Catholic Negro friends from the Marquette student body.

Catholicity has opened my eyes. It has brought me new happiness. It has consoled me and heartened me. I rely on prayer in my athletic and class efforts, as much as I do in my physical and mental abilities. And my plea to heaven at the moment is that I may ever remain faithful to the Church.

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CROSSING THE GOAL LINE

KNUTE ROCKNE

I USED to be impressed at the sight of my players receiving Holy Communion every morning, and finally I made it a point to go to Mass with them on the morning of the game. I realized that it appeared more or less incongruous when we arrived in town for a game, for the general public to see my boys rushing off to church as soon as they got off the train, while their coach rode to the hotel and took his ease. So for the sake of appearance, if nothing else, I made it a point to go to church with the boys on the morning of a game.

One night before a big game in the East, I was nervous and worried about the outcome of the game the next day and was unable to sleep. I tossed and rolled about the bed and finally decided that I'd get up and dress, then go down to the lobby and sit in a chair alone with my thoughts. It must have been two or three o'clock in the morning when I arrived in the deserted lobby, so I took a chair and tried to get that football game off my mind by engaging some bellboys in conversation.

Along about five or six o'clock in the morning, I started pacing the lobby of the hotel, when suddenly I ran into two of my own players hurrying out. I asked one of them where they were going at such an hour, although I had a good idea. Then I retired to a chair in the lobby where I couldn't be seen, but where I could see everyone who went in or out of the door. Within the next few minutes, my players kept hurrying out of the door in pairs or

Crossing The Goal Line

groups, and finally, when they were about all gone, I got near the door so I could question the next player who came along.

In a minute or two, the last of the squad hurried out of the elevator and made for the door. I stopped them and asked them if they, too, were going to Mass, and they replied that they were. I decided to go along with them. Although they probably did not realize it, these youngsters were making a powerful impression on me with their piety and devotion, and when I saw all of them walking to the Communion rail to receive, and realized the several hours of sleep they had sacrificed in order to do this, I understood for the first time what a powerfully their religion was to those boys in their work on the football field. Then it was that I really began to see the light; to know what was missing in my life, and later on I had the great pleasure of joining my boys at the Communion rail.

MY CATHOLIC NEIGHBOR

DR. SAM ATKINSON

THE story of my conversion is very simply told. I was a scientific Socialist who believed that everybody should be shaken loose from all preconceived ideas. I lectured extensively for the Socialist party of the United States and was for some time the provincial organizer for the Social Democratic Party of Canada. My father was a Baptist minister in England, where I was born. Coming to Canada over thirty years ago, I trained for the work of an Evangelist and, as is customary on this side of the Atlantic, I preached for any or all of the denominations. I could not accept the Hyper-Calvinism of the strict Baptist denomination to which my father belonged. But I had been brought up to accept those English traditions, handed down from father to son since the Reformation, in reference to the Catholic Church, and therefore knew nothing of Catholicism except these false ideas.

The multiplicity of sects and denominations in the United States of America is appalling. It seems as if every Hindu cult, every new philosophical idea, and every crazy religious conception can get a foothold over here. The people of Canada pride themselves upon their British connections and are not easily carried away.

In my book *My Catholic Neighbours* I tell in detail the story of my background, my conversion, and how, through reason, I carefully examined the teachings and doctrines of the One True Church. I became interested in the study of Catholic teachings as the result of a chal-

My Catholic Neighbor

lenge from a Catholic priest. As a Rationalist lecturer I had examined the philosophies and teachings of almost all the various cults. This priest, the Rev. Father Finn of Rockford, Illinois, heard me lecture before an educational group and invited me to take tea with him that afternoon at the rectory of the Pro-Cathedral. After tea, we had a very lengthy discussion in which he said: "Mr. Atkinson, you seem to be familiar with all the religions in the world except the teachings of the Catholic Church. Do you realize that in the United States there are 20,000,000 Catholics, and that in your own country of Canada out of a population of 10,000,000 people there are almost 4,000,000 Catholics? These people are your neighbors! When you study Confucianism you go to Confucius. Have you gone to Catholic authorities for your knowledge of Catholic teachings? I think you owe it to these neighbors of yours to find out what they really believe. To do that you must go to their own authorities." Then pointing his finger at me he said: "Mr. Atkinson, I do not believe that you are the kind of man who will willfully bear false witness against his neighbor. I am going to give you a list of books and I am going to ask you to read them."

As a result of this conversation I began to make a thorough study of the Catholic teaching. Space will not permit me to record the number of books I read, but it was not the reading of books that led me to the door of the One True Church.

My reading of so-called scientific socialistic literature, my acceptance of a mere materialistic conception of history, had made me virtually a philosophical anarchist. I regarded God as an idea. I looked upon Jesus of Nazareth merely as a great teacher. I thought the Virgin-born story was a myth. Not believing in the existence of God, I could not acquire faith by merely reading about it. I had been looking for a way in which to solve the problems of

our complex life. I could not find it, and no man will ever find it until he recognizes that faith is the gift of God.

I kept faith with Father Finn and read the books according to promise. When next I visited Rockford, intending to call upon him, I found out that he was dead. I met Father Whalen of St. Mary's upon the street and he informed me of Father Finn's death. As I had a speaking engagement in the city that evening, he suggested that I should come to the rectory for a late visit. This I was glad to do. Father Whalen was a victim of the war. I think he had been gassed. Within a few months after my visit with him, he, too, joined the majority.

That evening will stand out in my memory always as one of the most pleasant of my life. We discussed a great many things apart from religion which inspired confidence. He told me that he thought Father Tom had been pressing me too hard on the night of our argument. With a merry twinkle in his eye, he said, "Father Tom was a proselytizer first, last, and all the time." He gave me a better insight into the life of a priest, his duties, his cares, hopes, and longings. There was none of the usual small talk and empty compliments that usually pass between men. He was a master of liberal arts. He quoted Browning, Tennyson, and Whittier to illustrate a point as readily as he would mention some of the early Fathers of the Church. I could not forget for a moment that he was a priest, but he made me feel that he was a brother also. There was no problem I had he did not grasp.

It was nearly two o'clock in the morning when I rose to leave. Quite casually he took my hand and said: "Atkinson, I should like to ask you a very personal question, 'Do you ever pray?' " "Why, Father Whalen," I replied, "I have not said a prayer in ten years." "Well, now," he said, "as one gentleman to another, may I ask you to do me a favor? Will you kneel at your bedside every night and say a little prayer?"

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"But, Father Whalen," I said, "that would be hypocrisy. In the first place I don't believe there is anyone who will hear my prayer, and in the second place I'm not in the frame of mind to make a promise which would be more like a joke to me."

"But, my dear friend," the priest replied, "if there is no God, no harm will be done, therefore you can surely try it."

I stood for a few moments wondering. As one gentleman to another. That was the request. But if there is no God, what is the use of praying and what shall I ask for? I told the priest my quandary. What could I pray for? Father Whalen said: "Just kneel at your bedside, and if you can't think of anything else to say, just say 'God give me light.'"

I returned to the hotel, undressed quickly, turned off the light, and jumped into bed. I lay for a few moments thinking, then there flashed through my mind the words, "As one gentleman to another." Now, I considered myself a gentleman. I had made a promise. Foolishly, perhaps. But whether I was a gentleman or not depended upon whether I kept my word or not. I sprang out of bed, knelt beside it, clasped my hands in the attitude of prayer, and cried, "God give me light," got back into bed with the satisfaction of having, at least, kept my word.

There are some men who seem to have the gift of stirring your very soul. Christ must have had a tremendous insight into the future of His Church when He said to Peter the Fisherman, "Henceforth, thou shalt catch men." A good fisherman once said, "Set your rod and get back. The further you are out of sight, the better are your chances to catch fish." Father Whalen was a true "fisher of men" in this respect. He sank himself. He entered into no discussions. He was not controversial. He did not try to reason with me. He knew that faith is the gift of God. St. Thomas Aquinas said that faith "is an

act of the understanding, adhering to divine truth by command of the will, which is moved by the grace of God." It is called the gift of God, because it depends on the grace of God, which enlightens the mind to see the truth, and moves the will to consent to it. This was bringing me back again to my father's statement. I might read until my brain gave out. I might examine my Catholic neighbor's beliefs merely with the idea that I should not misrepresent them. But the salvation of my soul was the paramount question and I could not believe things divine unless the grace of God moved me. Long afterwards I found out that the following morning, Father Whalen visited the Poor Clares and asked them to pray for my soul's salvation.

I was very, very far from the Church, however, at this time. I had kept my promise faithfully as to my daily prayer, but felt no effects. In fact, it seemed as if life and its problems became darker all the time. Perhaps there is an explanation of it which will sometime be made plain. I had a discussion recently with a man who was arguing against the miracles of our Lord. He used the restoration of sight to the blind man as an illustration. "Why did not Christ simply tell him he could see instead of spitting upon the ground, making clay of the spittle, and then covering his eyes with the clay?" With my experiences in my mind I replied that Christ being God, and being with God from the beginning, would find it the most natural thing to repair a broken optic with the "dust of the earth," since man was originally created from the dust. Further, to illustrate a spiritual truth, Christ, knowing that the majority of blind men have at least a glimmering of light, so that they can at least tell the difference between the light and the dark, decided to make the darkness deeper, so that the light would come to him with greater force, and make the miracle have a mightier significance.

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I was coming nearer to the light, but the darkness was fearful, and to overcome that I tried to get further and further away from God. Voltaire said: "The more we read, the more we have learned, and the more we have meditated, the better conditioned we are to affirm that we know nothing." As a matter of fact, I was being disturbed by what I read. I found out that the Protestant traditions I had become accustomed to hearing in my boyhood were untrue. I began to realize that man does not see the whole of anything. That a scientist is not a reliable authority outside the particular branch in which he has specialized, and not always in that. The fact that Sir Oliver Lodge was a great scientist did not make him an authority upon religion. That science and religion were two distinct fields. That the mission of the true scientist was not to base his arguments upon hypothetical statements, but to search for a demonstrable fact. That fact must be true. There could therefore be no conflict between the truth of religion and the truth of science. How could I arrive at the truth? Only by being brought into contact with the only source who can guide men into all truth. By a simple little experience I was to learn that "the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life."

My wife and I had laid out a garden. We were city dwellers and this was our first garden. We dug it ourselves. We set the seeds ourselves. We put in the shrubbery. We bought little plants and transplanted them. All winter long we had studied pictures of gardens, seed catalogues, designs. When the spring came we had mapped out quite an ambitious program for a couple of amateurs. In all fairness I must admit that my wife did most of the work, but I did what I could in the time I had at my disposal. We walked out in that garden watching for the tender sprouts. Many of them came. One day, when our garden was full of tender little plants and shrubs, there came a violent storm. I was in the city at

the time and everyone remarked about the terrific downpour of rain. I was unusually concerned. What about our garden? The downpour was heavy enough to destroy our young plants. As soon as the storm passed I jumped into my car and drove hurriedly home. By this time the sun was shining. My wife was out in the garden. As I walked across to her she cried: "Look, Sam, we had a terrible storm, but it didn't hurt anything. Not a leaf has been disturbed or a plant broken." In that moment, something took hold of me. Speech left me. The tears poured down my cheeks. When I could, I said: "Isn't it wonderful! That rain might all have dripped at once and ruined this garden. There must be a wonderful intelligence behind the rainfall. There must be a lawmaker behind the law. There *is* a Supreme Being. There *is* a God and I believe in Him. God help my unbelief."

"Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit," said the Lord. Father Whalen's method had proved successful. Faith, as a gift of God, had been restored. Immediately all other difficulties passed away. The plan of salvation was clear. God had given His Son to be our salvation. All that I had been reading about the One True Church was clarified. My attitude toward the Catholic Church was changed. Now it was not merely a question of examining the beliefs of my Catholic neighbors. It was a question of seeking to know for my own soul's sake.

The real secret of my misery during the past months was made plain. I had been passing through the deeper darkness. The consciousness that I had betrayed the Christ had been forcing itself upon my mind. I had been running away from God, but relentlessly, the Son of God had been following me, and the Holy Spirit had been working through these experiences to bring conviction to me. Francis Thompson in *The Hound of Heaven* has described such experiences as mine with an insight that is truly remarkable:

My Catholic Neighbor

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days,
I fled Him down the arches of the years;
I fled Him down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the midst of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.
Up vistaed hopes I sped;
And shot, precipitated,
Adown Titanic Glooms of chasmed fears
From those strong Feet that followed, followed after,
But with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbed pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
They beat — and a Voice beat
More instant than the Feet —
“All things betray thee, who betrayest Me.”

Sometimes I think that every man can find his counterpart among the twelve Apostles. Mine was St. Thomas, doubting Thomas. You remember that after the resurrection eleven of the Apostles were assembled in an upper room, and, “when the doors were shut . . . there stood Jesus in the midst of them.” Thomas did not believe their account of the risen Lord. He was the absent member of the group. When they told him of this visit he would not believe. “Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails . . . and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe.” Eight days later the twelve Apostles were assembled in the upper room, and, “the doors being shut . . . there stood Jesus in the midst of them.” Then, when Thomas was able to thrust his hand into the wounded side, he believed. You may shut the door of heart and mind to the Christ, but He is the unescapable Christ. You cannot get away from Him. You may doubt. You may deny. But He is there just the same, seeking the souls of men. Why does He love us so? He might well have said to me:

Alack, thou knowest not
How little worthy of any love thou art!
Whom wilt thou find to love ignoble thee,
Save Me, save only Me?

That indeed is the greatest of all wonders. His love is so unmerited on my part. I have done so much to offend. I am so unworthy. I have sinned much. I have denied Him often. I should never have found Him had He not been seeking me.

"What have you found in the Catholic Church?" I am often asked. The following illustration will answer that question. A little girl lay sick of a fever. As she tossed from side to side upon her bed, her mother did all in her power to relieve her restlessness. She offered the child the juice of an orange, but the little one refused to take it. She pressed a luscious grape against the child's lips, she smoothed the pillow, she did all the kindly little things only a mother thinks of at such a time, but nothing satisfied. Finally, not knowing what to do, she turned down the bedclothes, lifted the little girl out of the bed, and laid her throbbing head against her breast. Heaving a sigh, and looking up with a wistful smile into her mother's face, the little one cried: "Ah, Mother! That's just what I want!"

Folded in the arms of our Holy Mother, the Church, I have found my greatest wants satisfied because, in Her, I have found what I needed most. Peace? Not so much as Truth! Happiness? Not so much as Life — more abundant! Liberty? Not so much as the spirit of self-denial which considers the liberty of another more! Satisfaction? Yes, through Sacrifice!

For all through life I see a cross,
Where sons of men yield up their breath;
There is no gain, except by loss,
There is no life, except by death —
There is no glory but through shame,
No honor, but by bearing blame,
And His eternal passion saith
Be emptied of glory, and self, and name.

In the Catholic Church I have found how little I am, but how wonderfully great our Saviour is.

PRACTICAL FAILURE OF ANGLICANISM

REV. OWEN FRANCIS DUDLEY

MY FIRST introduction to the Catholic Church was being spat in the eye by a Roman Catholic boy at school. He was bigger than me; so I let it pass. But I remembered he was a Roman Catholic.

My next was at a magic-lantern entertainment to which I was taken by my mother. In the course of it there appeared on the screen the picture of a very old man in a large hat and a long white soutane. I must have asked my mother who it was, and been informed briefly that it was the "Pope of Rome." I don't quite know how, but the impression left in my mind was that there was something fishy about the "Pope of Rome."

At school, I learned in "English history" (which I discovered later was not altogether English and not altogether history) that there was something fishy not only about the Pope of Rome, but about the whole of the Pope's Church. I gathered that for a thousand years or more the Pope had held all England in his grip, and not only England but all Europe; also that during that period the "Roman," "Romish," or "Roman Catholic" Church had become more and more corrupt, until finally the original Christianity of Christ had almost disappeared; that idols were worshiped instead of God; that everywhere superstition held sway. No education; no science.

I read of how the "Glorious Reformation" had come; how the light of the Morning Star had burst upon the darkness; how the Pope's yoke had been flung off, and

Rev. Owen Francis Dudley

with it all the trappings and corruptions of Popery; of the triumph of the Reformation in England; of the restoration of the primitive doctrines of Christ and the "light of the pure Gospel"; of the progress and prosperity that followed in the reign of "good Queen Bess"; of the freeing of men's minds and the expansion of thought released from the tyranny of Rome.

All this, as an English schoolboy, I drank in. And I believed it.

Next, I did a thing that we all of us have to do; I grew up. And I grew up without questioning the truth of what I had been taught.

The time came when I decided to become a Church of England clergyman. For this purpose I entered an Anglican Theological college. And there I must confess I began to get somewhat muddled; for I could not find out what I should have to teach when I became an Anglican clergyman. Even to my youthful mind it became abundantly clear that my various tutors were contradicting each other on vital matters of Christian doctrine. My own fellow students were perpetually arguing on the most fundamental points of religion. I finally emerged from that theological college feeling somewhat like an addled egg, and only dimly realizing that the Church of England had given me no theology. I appreciated later that it had no system of theology to give.

It was during that period at college that I first of all went out to Rome, on a holiday. And whilst there I managed to see no less a person than the Pope of Rome himself. It was Pope Pius the Tenth — being borne into St. Peter's on the *sedia gestatoria*. He passed quite close to where I was standing, and I could see his face very clearly. It was the face of a saint. I could only suppose that somehow he had managed to keep good in spite of being Pope of Rome. That incident left a deeper impression on my mind than I was aware of at that time.

Practical Failure Of Anglicanism

I kept a diary of all that I saw in Rome, and wrote in it: "I can quite imagine a susceptible young man being carried away by all this, and wanting to become a Roman Catholic." I myself was safe from the lure of Popery, of course.

As a full-fledged Anglican clergyman, I first of all worked in a country parish. At the end of a year, however, my vicar and I came to the conclusion that it would be wiser to part company; for we were disagreed as to what the Christian religion was.

I then went to a parish in the East End of London, down amongst the costers, hop pickers, and dock laborers. I went down there full of zeal, determined to set the Thames on fire. I very soon discovered, though, that the vast mass of the East-Enders had no interest at all in the religion that I professed. Out of the six thousand or so in the parish not more than one or two hundred ever came near the church. Our hoppers' socials in the parish hall were well patronized, however. Great nights they were, with a thrilling din of barrel organ, dancing, and singing. I found the Donkey Row hoppers immensely lovable and affectionate. We had wonderful days with them each September in the hopfields of Kent. It was social work. The mass of them we could not even touch with religion.

I grew somewhat "extreme" in this parish under the influence of my vicar, to whom at first I was too "Protestant." I remember he disliked the hat that I arrived in — a round, flat one. The vicarage dog ate the hat, and I bought a more "priestly" one.

For a year or two things went fairly smoothly and I suffered from no qualms about the Anglican religion. How far I sincerely believed that I was a "Catholic" during that period I find it difficult to estimate now. Sufficiently at any rate to argue heatedly with "low-church" and "modernist" clergy in defense of my claim.

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And sufficiently to be thoroughly annoyed with a Roman Catholic lady who, whenever we met, told me she was praying for my conversion to the "true Church," and a Franciscan Friar in the hopfields who told me the same. I felt like telling them they could pray until they were black in the face. I remember, too, that whenever I met a Roman Catholic priest I experienced a sense of inferiority and a vague feeling of not quite being the real thing, or, at least, of there being an indefinable but marked difference between us.

It was when I could no longer avoid certain unpleasant facts with which I was confronted in my work as an Anglican clergyman, that the first uneasiness came.

I was in the house one day of a certain dock laborer who lived exactly opposite our church but never darkened its doors. I chose the occasion to ask him — why not? His reply flattened me out; it was to the effect that he could see no valid reason for believing what I taught in preference to what the "low-church bloke dahn the road" taught. I could not give a satisfactory answer to his challenge. I don't suppose he believed in either of us really; but he had placed me in a quandary. We were both Anglican clergymen, and we were both flatly contradicting each other from our respective pulpits.

It set a question simmering in my mind — Why should *anybody* believe what I taught? And a further question — What authority had I for what I was teaching?

I began, for the first time with real anxiety, to examine the Anglican Church. And with that examination I found I could no longer blind myself to certain patent facts, which hitherto I had brushed aside. The Established Church was a church of contradictions, of parties, each of which had an equal claim to represent it, and all of which were destructive of its general claim to be a part of the Church of Christ — directly one affirmed its Unity.

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As far as authority was concerned, it was possible to believe anything or nothing without ecclesiastical interference. You could be an extreme "Anglo-Catholic and hold all the doctrines of the Catholic Church except the inconvenient ones like Papal Infallibility; you could be an extreme modernist and deny (while retaining Christian terms) all the doctrines of the Christian religion. No bishop said Yes or No imperatively to any party. The bishops were as divided as the parties. For practical purposes, if bishops did interfere, they were ignored, even by their own clergy. If the Holy Ghost, as claimed, was with the Church of England, then, logically, the Holy Ghost was the author of contradictions; for each party claimed His guidance. These facts presented me with a quandary which appeared insurmountable, and which remained insurmountable.

I have often been asked, since my conversion, how, in view of them, Anglican clergy can be sincere in remaining where they are. My reply has been — they *are* sincere. There is a state of mental blindness in which one is incapable of seeing the plain logic of facts. I only know that it was over a year before I acted on these facts myself. And I honestly believe I was sincere during that period. Only those who have been Protestants can appreciate the thick veil of prejudice, fear, and mistrust of "Rome" which hampers every groping toward the truth.

It was about this time that there fell into my hands a book written by a Catholic priest, who himself had once been an Anglican clergyman, who had been faced by the same difficulties, and who had found the solution of them all in the Catholic Church. "But the Catholic Church *can't* be the solution," I said. And there rose before my mind a vision of all I had been taught about her from my boyhood upwards — her false teaching, her corruptions of the doctrines of Christ. The Catholic Church, though, was the Church of the overwhelming

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majority of Christians, and always had been. If what I had been taught was true, then, for nearly two thousand years the great mass of Christians had been deluded and deceived by lies. Could Christ have allowed a hoax, an imposture of that magnitude? In His name? The Catholic Church was either an imposture or —

Or what?

I began to buy Catholic books. To study Catholic doctrines. To read history from the Catholic standpoint.

The day came when I sat looking into the fire asking myself: "Is what the world says of the Catholic Church true? Or what the Catholic Church says of herself? Have I all these years been shaking my fist at a phantom of my own imagining fed on prejudice and ignorance?"

I compared her Unity with the complete lack of it outside. Her Authority with the absence of anything approaching real authority in the Church of which I was a member and a minister. The unchangeable moral code she proclaimed with the wavering, shilly-shallying moral expediency that Protestantism allowed. She began to look so very much more like the Church that God would have made, just as the Established Church began to look so very much more like the church that man would have made.

When I was passing Westminster Cathedral one day I went in and knelt for half an hour before the Blessed Sacrament. I came out terribly shaken — spiritually shaken. It is impossible to describe; but in that short half hour what, until now, I had contemplated as a problem, had suddenly assumed an aspect of imperative-ness. A problem that had to be solved, not played with. For within those four walls there loomed up before my spiritual vision an immensity, a vast reality, before which everything else had shrunk away. The church, whose clergyman I was, seemed to have slipped from under my feet.

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I returned to the East End dazed. That night amongst the hoppers I felt like a stranger moving about.

I went about for weeks in a state of uncertainty, undecided in my conscience as to whether I was morally bound to face things out or not — wretched under the suspicion that what “Rome” said might be true — that I was no priest; that my “Mass” was no Mass at all; that I was genuflecting before — ?; that my “absolutions” were worthless. The more I prayed about it, the more unreal my ministry appeared.

I decided to consult a certain very “extreme” clergyman, whom I believed to be sincere beyond question (as he was), and a man of deep spiritual piety. I had three or four talks with him in all, the general result of which was to leave me more confused intellectually than ever, but spiritually more at peace; though it took me months before I realized that this peace was a false one, and that I had shelved the matter not from its intellectual difficulties, but for worldly reasons. For those talks had banged upon me an unpleasant vista of what might happen if I went “over to Rome” — the loss of my position, my salary, friends and all; not only the burning of all my boats, but the wounding of my mother and father cruelly. Even more, “Rome” might not accept me for her priesthood; in any case it would be starting all over again, possibly from baptism. If she did not want me for a priest, I should have to . . .

My whole being revolted against the prospect. It was impossible — such a demand. I had been carried away by emotions. It was a snare of Satan. I should be a traitor to the Church of my baptism. God had placed me here in the Church of England. He was blessing my work as its minister. He had given me endless graces.

I buried myself in that work again, and for a time succeeded in forgetting, or at least stifling, the fears that had been my torment — until the haphazard remark of a

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photographer (registering my features), an agnostic I believe, opened my eyes to my inability honestly to defend the Established Church's position; it was to the effect that if Christianity were true, obviously the Roman Catholic Church, with her authority was right. It was the testimony of a man who had no ax to grind. A Jewish dentist made the same remark in effect to me shortly afterwards. The man-in-the-street testifies the same with his: "If I were religious, I'd be a Roman Catholic."

Whether it was the photographer or not, my fears were released once more from their repression, abruptly and acutely, and this time I resolved that it should be a fight to the finish, either way — that no worldly or material consideration should interfere. The clergyman whom I had consulted had already made one thing clear in my mind — that the issue between Rome and Canterbury, the crux of the whole problem, was the claim of Rome to be the Infallible teaching authority appointed by God, and the denial by Canterbury of that claim. The whole question boiled down to the question of Infallibility, and on that everything else hung.

I entered upon an intensive study of the point. I read the history of the doctrine, the Fathers and the Councils of the Church, and what they had to say; examined its rationality. At the end of some months I came to the conclusion — that, as far as Holy Scripture, history, and reason were concerned, the Catholic Church could prove her claim to be God's Infallible Teacher up to the hilt.

It is difficult after all these years to recapture the exact mode of its appeal to my reason; but it was the appeal that the doctrine of the Infallibility of the Church inevitably presents to any man who is prepared to lay aside bias, prejudice, and preconceptions. I will try to state it in the fewest words possible.

Infallibility is the only guarantee we have that the Christian religion is true. Actually, if I, at this moment,

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did not believe in an Infallible Teacher appointed by God, then nothing on earth would induce me to believe in the Christian religion. If, as outside the Catholic Church, Christian doctrines are a matter of private judgment, and therefore the Christian religion a mere matter of human opinion, then there is no obligation upon any living soul to believe in it. Why should I stake my immortal soul upon human opinion? For that is all you have if you refuse the Infallible Church.

In itself her claim may be reduced to this: the Catholic Church, when she defines a doctrine of Faith or morals, when she tells us what to believe and what to do; in a word, what the Christian religion is — then, and then only, she is prevented by God from making a mistake, from teaching the untruth. The Church is God's mouthpiece — His voice. Could God's voice speak untruth? Protestantism, claiming the Holy Ghost and presenting a jumble of contradictions, declares, in effect, that God *does* speak untruth. And only blinded reason prevents its adherents from seeing and admitting that unpalatable fact. Sanity alone should compel every thinking man to halt before the Catholic Church's very claim.

It is commonly assumed that submission to an Infallible authority in religion involves slavery, that Catholics cannot think for themselves, that their reason is stifled, that they commit intellectual suicide. "No educated man could accept the medieval dogmas of the Catholic Church." Examined in the light of horse sense and human reason, that shibboleth of the modernist leaders is revealed in all its naked stupidity, as an irrational and unscientific piece of snobbery for gulling the masses and blinding them to the claims of the Catholic Church. In intent, since the dogmas are the same today, it means: "No educated man could submit to what the Catholic Church claims to be infallibly true": or,

more simply, "No educated man could submit to Infallibility in the matter of religion." For acceptance involves submission to the one Church that claims it.

The obvious reply is: "In the name of all that is sane — why not?" When in every other department of life he is submitting to infallible truth already? Is slavery involved; is reason stifled; is it intellectual suicide — to submit to the infallible truth of the law of gravity; do men jump off cliffs on the chance of going up instead of down? To submit, as every scientist does, to the fixed data of science, believing them to be infallibly true; could he be a scientist at all, if he refused to submit? To submit, as every educated man does, by eating, to the infallible truth that the human body needs food? To submit, even if he was not there and never saw it, to the infallible truth of the Great War? To submit, as every mathematician does, to the multiplication table? To the axioms of Euclid? To submit, as every honest businessman does, to the infallible principles of business honesty? As all businessmen do to the infallible requirements for running a business at all? Were a businessman to conduct his business as the modernists conduct their religion, he would close down as the modernists have closed down Christianity for themselves and their adherents.

Examples could be multiplied to show that in every department of life every rational being is already submitting to infallible truth. Is it rational or irrational to proclaim that no educated man could submit in the hundredth case, that of religion, when he submits in the other ninety-nine?

On the face of it the rationality lies with those who submit in the hundredth and most vital case of all. Is it a sign of education to submit to human opinions in preference to the revealed truths of God, who Himself declares that they were to be taught and accepted, or else refused under pain of eternal damnation? To prefer

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the negations of modernism to dogmas of the Church that *must* teach infallibly if she teaches Christianity, i.e., the revealed truths of God? Of the Church that *must* be infallible when she teaches the truth, since truth is an infallible thing?

When, as far as reason was concerned, I was satisfied as to the unique claim of Rome, upon which all else depended, I decided to present my case for no longer remaining in the Church of England to one or two prominent scholars among its clergy. I did so. As far as I can recollect, the "refutations" given me made no impression whatever. Though easily my superiors in scholarship, I had sufficient knowledge and logic to perceive that the great chain of Scriptural and historical evidence for the Catholic claim remained unbroken by excerpts from St. Augustine, St. Cyprian, and others, conveniently interpreted according to the will of the reader and not to the mind of the author. It is little less than amazing to me now that scholars of repute should endeavor to counter the vast weight of evidence against them with what they themselves must in honesty admit is the less likely interpretation — to fit the rock to the pebble rather than the pebble to the rock.

To my case for leaving a church which was so plainly devoid, in view of its contradictions, of any divine teaching authority, I received no valid answer at all. Every conceivable *argumentum ad hominem* was presented; sentiment, "Roman fever," "intellectual suicide," treachery to the "Church of my Baptism," "corruption of Rome," the whole well-worn gamut of "objections" was paraded. I had read them all, though, already, and found them untrue. The great *facts* about the Catholic Church were left standing — unassailable.

And those facts demanded submission.

I have been asked again and again since I became a Catholic, why I left the Church of England, and often,

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the implication behind the question, if not actually expressed, has been that my motive for doing so could not have been based on reason. There is a prevalent idea that converts to Rome are in some mysterious manner "got hold of," or "caught by Roman priests." I would like to assure any non-Catholic who may happen to read this that converts are not "got hold of" or "caught." In my own case I had rarely even spoken to a "Roman priest," before, of my own free will and with my reason already convinced, I went to consult one at the London Oratory. It is true that in doing so I was still full of Protestant suspicion and imagined that he would be extremely gratified to "get hold of" a real live Anglican clergyman; I should make a splendid "catch."

The priest in question received me most calmly. He showed no sign of excitement; he did not stand on his head or caper about. He did not even appear to regard me as a particularly good "catch." He answered my questions and invited me to come again, if I cared to, but no more. I left, feeling several sizes smaller.

I learned many things, however, from that interview. It was so entirely different from the interviews with Anglican scholars. For the priest there was no difficult case to bolster up. Not a single question that I put to him presented "difficulties." There were no awkward corners to get round. I believe his candidness about the human side of the Catholic Church almost startled me. Never once was he on his defense. All that I had been groping toward so painfully and laboriously was so obvious to him as to leave me wondering how it could ever have not been obvious to myself.

I realized, too, from that interview that "going over to Rome" would be very much more than stepping out of a small boat on to an Atlantic liner. It would be no less than coming into the Kingdom of God on earth — and the Catholic Church was that Kingdom of God.

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I was not coming in on my own terms, but on hers. I was not conferring a privilege upon her; she was conferring an inestimable privilege upon me. I was not going to make myself a Catholic, the Catholic Church was going to make me one. There would be a formal course of instruction, a real testing of my faith, and finally, a real submission to a living authority — the living authority of God on earth.

I hope I am wrong, but I have sometimes suspected that there are some who have never made their submission to the Catholic Church, and yet who have reached the point at which I stood, after seeing that priest; those whose reason has led them to entrance gates of the Kingdom of God, who have seen inscribed above them that word *submission* in all its naked, uncompromising meaning — and turned away. I wonder if they can ever forget that they once looked into their mother's eyes — and refused.

Reason may submit; the will may refuse.

It is a matter of dispositions and the grace of God, once conviction of the reason has been attained. Actually, it involves an *unconditional* surrender of the will to God — no easy task for a Protestant whose whole outlook in the spiritual direction has been determined by likes and dislikes, who has been accustomed to a religion that costs him little and claims the right of private judgment, who has detested being *told* what to believe and what to do; in a word, who has been habitually indisposed, mentally and spiritually, for anything approaching unconditional submission of the will. I have no intention of hurting feelings, but I am convinced that the supreme difficulty for most Anglicans who would "like to go over to Rome," but do not, is their (unconscious perhaps) inability even to contemplate submission to the one Church that demands it. When the late Archbishop of Canterbury publicly proclaimed that he and

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the adherents of the Established Church would *never* pass under a doorway upon whose lintel was inscribed the word *submission*, he was precisely expressing the Protestant mind. Mercifully he was unaware that submission to the Catholic Church is submission to God.

I claim no credit, in my own case, for submitting; but rather blame for delaying so long — for the moral cowardice that hesitates to lay the onus of the consequences upon Almighty God, to burn one's boats and take the plunge.

When, by Divine Grace, I was ready, and had made my decision, there was only one thing to do. I told my vicar, packed my bags, and left the East End. At the London Oratory I placed myself under instruction and, later on, was received.

I would like to mention that my Protestant vicar and a curate who succeeded me in the parish are now also, both of them — priests of the Catholic Church.

"Well — and what have you found?"

I will tell you — and what I was told I should find.

I was told that the Catholic Church always placed the Church before Christ — that Christ was kept in the background. I have found, on the contrary, that she places me in a personal relationship with Christ that can never be attained outside — that Christ is her very being, by whom and for whom she exists, and to whom to unite her children is her one ceaseless care.

I was told that if I became a Catholic my mind would be fettered, my reason stifled; I should no longer be able to think for myself. I have found on the contrary that the Catholic Church placed me on a platform of truth from which even a poor mind like mine can rise to fathomless heights. I have found the truth that sets men free.

I was told that in the Catholic Church it was all decay and stagnation. I have found, however, the very life of

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God Himself pulsing through every vein of His Mystical Body. It was like coming out of a small stuffy room with all the windows closed, and striding up to the top of some great hill with all the winds of heaven roaring round. I have found Life.

Instead of the hard spiritual tyranny of which I was told, I have found a loving Mother who supplies my every human need. Instead of corruption, sanctity unknown outside.

And sinners, too. For the Church of Christ does not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax. Like her Master she ever seeks and saves that which is lost. She is big enough and loving enough to hold even sinners in the fold; if she did not, she would not be the Church of Christ.

Instead of hatred, I have found compassion for those outside — for the sheep without a shepherd. And I would that I could show them right into the heart of him whom men call the Pope of Rome — the shepherd of the sheep, the Vicar of Christ on earth; for then I would show them no ambitious autocrat striving for worldly power, but a loving father loved by his children as no other man on earth is loved.

And I have found the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. The City of God.

That City that "hath no need of the sun, nor of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God hath enlightened it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof."

UNADULTERATED CATHOLICISM

SHEILA KAYE-SMITH

IN WRITING about my conversion I must avoid the pitfall of being wise eight years after the event, for I am aware of a temptation to credit myself with thoughts and feelings which really came later. I am a Catholic now for many reasons which, though they may have been dormant, did not actively influence me at the time I first became one. I should like to think that I joined the Church because I saw the choice offered me between two civilizations — the civilization of Catholic Christianity, with its entirely spiritual values, and the material civilization of the world-State which may at some future date rise out of the fused ideals of Moscow and Hollywood. But I cannot delude myself that I realized this alternative till I had read Mr. Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. Then I saw where I stood and was thankful; but I cannot claim the vision for my own.

I am, of course, in a different position from many converts in that for some years before my reception into the Church I believed and practised much of its teachings. I called and thought myself a Catholic for twelve years before I actually became one. I did not have to face the difficulties that commonly beset converts from a definite Protestant form of religion or from no religion at all. I believed in the Transubstantiation, in Purgatory, in the Sacrifice of the Mass; I prayed for the dead, I invoked the saints, I went to confession. Though I now see that I did not quite believe and do those things as

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I believe and do them now, I was very differently situated from those who have to learn about them for the first time. In many ways my position was easier, but in others it was more difficult, in that the issues for me were not straightforward, but confusing and uncertain.

I should think many non-Catholic readers will exclaim: "If I could believe in Transubstantiation and all the rest, I shouldn't waste twelve years in the Church of England. I should go the whole way." I hope they would. I wish I had. Twelve years ago I looked at Catholicism and turned away from it because it repelled me, whereas the religion of the Anglican High Church did not but attract me with its color and warmth and sense of personal romance. Catholicism still repelled me, even when the other had lost its attraction, and continued to repel me in a decreasing measure until I was actually inside the Church.

But I cannot regard those twelve years of Anglo-Catholicism as wasted, though I am sorry I made the choice I did. As an Anglo-Catholic I learned much of the faith and practice of the universal Church. I was "under instruction," as it were, though for about two dozen times as long as most catechumens.

I preached as well as practised my religion: I wrote and spoke, attended congresses, visited the principal High Churches. But I often felt doubts of my position. These were sometimes explicit. I once consulted my Anglican confessor, and he set them at rest, because — I realize now and half suspected then — that was what I really wanted. More often my doubts were implicit: I can see now, looking back on those days, that some of my most decided gestures on behalf of Anglo-Catholicism were due to a secret uneasiness, the need to justify myself.

For instance, a few years after I joined the High Church movement (not in the first flush of my enthusiasm, when I wrote such novels as *Tamarisk Town* and

Joanna Godden, but later, when my zeal was losing some of its warmth), I wrote a novel dealing with Anglo-Catholicism in a country village — *The End of the House of Alard*. This was, I realized even at that time, an attempt at self-explanation — to myself as well as to others. I also colored the picture attractively for my own sake — I painted Anglo-Catholicism as I hoped and dreamed, but only half believed it to be. I had never known a parish like Vinehall or a parson like Father Luce. I created them as a part of a wish fulfillment, and idealized that which I could not quite face as I saw it.

I should never want to write such a book about Catholicism, and those Catholics who have sometimes said they would like a Catholic novel from me will, I fear (or rather hope), be disappointed — that is to say if they mean a novel of the same type as *Alard*. I no longer feel the need to justify myself — to myself or to anyone else. I have been given a faith which is objective, and I am delivered from that uneasiness which accompanies most subjective ventures, and which urges the venturer to give them substance and objectivity by whatever means he may have in his power.

But in spite of these occult uncertainties it is quite possible that I should never have become a Catholic if it had not been for my marriage. This may seem strange to those Catholics who, I know, almost gave up praying for my conversion when they heard I had married a Church of England parson. But the fact remains that my marriage did more than anything else to shake me out of my place in the High Church movement. It worked in three ways. In the first place it broke up certain friendships which might have kept me where I was. In the second it brought me into close association with a mind which had never fallen to the glamor of Anglo-Catholicism in the same sense as I had. My husband, though believing all that the High Church party stood for, was

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inclined to be critical of some of its actions and personalities. He had not the same enthusiasm for it as a cause, and his Quaker ancestry had made him less sensational and more evangelical in his methods. I came to see a good many threadbare patches through his eyes.

The third effect of my marriage was perhaps the most far reaching. It showed me the Church of England from within. I was now, so to speak, thrust into its inner circles, to watch its methods, hear its rumors, and realize some of its inhibitions. I could no longer, as I had done hitherto, take refuge in one "extreme" corner and ignore the rest. The ostrich had to take her head out of the sand, to find — as one might have expected — a desert.

Though brought up in the Established Church, I had never really taken kindly to it or believed in its official position, and I should probably have had nothing to do with it after I was grown up but for my conviction that Anglo-Catholicism would soon transform it — had in fact already done so. As a parson's wife I saw how far this was from being the case. In certain ways the High Church party had undoubtedly tidied up the Church of England, but on a closer view it all seemed superficial and external, with no real change of heart. Moreover, for one parson who came to believe in the Immaculate Conception there would be two who came to disbelieve in the Virgin Birth: Modernism was having just such a powerful sweep as Anglo-Catholicism, and a far less critical reception.

As a parson's wife I saw how limited and unrepresentative was the appeal of official Anglicanism, and I also became convinced that Anglo-Catholicism was just as incapable of appealing to the nation as a whole. I could not help realizing that it attracted only certain types of mind. Here I must be careful, and not attribute to myself more than I realized at that time. Now I see Anglo-Catholicism as a religion of the oversublimated,

of nature that can feel, temporally, at least, at home in the subjective. Hence its appeal to women, and the rather hectic atmosphere of some of its religious externals. "Churchgoing without Church" was a phrase which came into my mind, and made me wonder: were all these women demanding all these services of their overworked clergy — one clergyman I knew had to celebrate twice daily during holiday time for a mere handful — because their churchgoing was a substitute for a missed reality? The psychologist as well as the Catholic priest would answer, "Yes," though they might differ in their interpretations of reality.

Then another chance phrase came along. I was discussing with a friend the Woman crowned with the stars in the Apocalypse and seeing the figure as our Lady rather than as the Church. My friend — a non-Catholic — replied: "But our Lady *is* the Church."

It will be difficult for Catholics to realize that these words gave me an entirely new conception. Till then I had never thought of the Church as a living thing. I had regarded it as a vast organization, and I had accepted the "branch theory" as commonly taught by Anglo-Catholics, according to which there are three branches of the one society — the Anglican, the Eastern, and the Roman. But once one conceives the Church as a living personality, it is impossible to see it divided and yet remaining alive. "The hand cannot say to the foot: 'I have no need of thee.'" My branch theory would not work once I saw the Church no longer as a mere organization but as the living body of Christ.

The reflections brought me to the conviction that I was in schism, and there seemed only one thing to do — to return to the unity from which I was cut off. I found a certain number of Anglo-Catholics shared my conviction, but it did not affect them in the same way. The only question for them was the validity of their orders,

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and they were convinced that the Catholic Church was wrong on that point, while accepting her teaching on every other, even on the Infallibility of the Pope. I was told that I was a member of the One True Church, no matter what the One True Church said to the contrary, that I had a right to all she offered, from indulgences down to the dispensation of her prelates as to fasting and abstinence. So why should I change? If I waited, reunion would come. Rome would become less intransigent, and welcome back into her fold those sheep who had hitherto managed to enjoy its privileges while remaining outside. I could not believe it.

Finding myself in every point of belief a Roman Catholic, and intellectually convinced of schism, there was only one thing for me to do. For many reasons I now wanted to do it, but for many others I did not. Twelve years ago I had been repelled by the austerity of the Catholic Church, and though after twelve years of Anglo-Catholicism, I no longer felt the same aversion, I still expected to find dryness, coldness, a certain unscrupulousness and unspirituality. Of course, I did not find them, but the fact that I expected to find them caused my heart to lag some weeks behind my mind.

For a long time I was unable to feel much happiness in what I was doing. But I remembered the story of Coventry Patmore, who almost up to the last was unable to bring himself to accept emotionally the Catholicism which his mind had long received. I knew that there were psychological reasons for this difficulty, due to the mind's undertow, the pull of hidden currents under the turning tide. It was only a question of waiting for the heart's release, for the day which came surely, when I could say: *Laetatus sum in his quae dicta sunt mihi: in Domum Domini ibimus* (Ps. 121:1).

I was glad when it was said unto me:
"We will go up to the house of the Lord."



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Howard Foster

KICKING AGAINST THE GOAD

GILBERT KEITH CHESTERTON

UNTIL about the end of the nineteenth century, a man was expected to give his reasons for joining the Catholic Church. Today a man is really expected to give his reasons for not joining it. This may seem an exaggeration: but I believe it to stand for a subconscious truth in thousands of minds. As for the fundamental reasons for a man doing it, there are only two that are really fundamental. One is that he believes it to be the solid objective truth, which is true whether he likes it or not; and the other that he seeks liberation from his sins. If there be any man for whom these are not the main motives, it is idle to inquire what were his philosophical or historical or emotional reasons for joining the old religion; for he has not joined it at all.

But a preliminary word or two may well be said about the other matter; which may be called the challenge of the Church. I mean that the world has recently become aware of that challenge in a curious and almost creepy fashion. I am literally one of the least, because one of the latest, of a crowd of converts who have been thinking along the same lines as I. There has been a happy increase in the number of Catholics; but there has also been, if I may so express it, a happy increase in the number of non-Catholics; in the sense of conscious non-Catholics. The world has become conscious that it is not Catholic. Only lately it would have been about as likely to brood on the fact that it was not Confucian. And all the array of

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reasons for not joining the Church of Rome marked but the beginning of the ultimate reason for joining it.

At this stage, let it be understood, I am speaking of a reaction and rejection which was, as mine would once have been, honestly if conventionally convinced. I am not speaking now of the stage of mere self-deception or sulky excuses; though such a stage there may be before the end. I am remarking that even while we truly think that the reasons are reasonable, we tacitly assume that the reasons are required. Far back at the beginning of all our changes, if I may speak for many much better than myself, there was the idea that we must have reasons for not joining the Catholic Church. I never had any reasons for not joining the Greek Church, or the religion of Mahomet, or the Theosophical Society, or the Society of Friends.

Doubtless I could have discovered and defined the reasons, had they been demanded; just as I could have found the reasons for not going to live in Lithuania, or not being chartered accountant, or not changing my name to Vortigern Brown, or not doing a thousand other things that it had never occurred to me to do. But the point is that I never felt the presence or pressure of the possibility at all; I heard no distant and distracting voice calling me to Lithuania or Islam; I had no itch to explain to myself why my name was not Vortigern or why my religion was not Theosophy. That sort of presence and pressure of the Church I believe to be universal and ubiquitous today; not only among Anglicans, but among Agnostics. I repeat that they do not mean that they have no real objections; on the contrary, I mean that they have begun really to object; they have begun to kick and struggle.

One of the most famous modern masters of fiction and social philosophy, perhaps the most famous of all, was once listening to a discussion between a High Church

Gilbert Keith Chesterton

curate and myself about the theory of Christianity. About half way through it, the great novelist began to dance wildly about the room with characteristic and hilarious energy calling out, "I'm not a Christian! I'm not a Christian!" flapping about like one escaped as from the net of the fowler. He had the sense of a huge vague army making an encircling movement, and heading him and herding him in the direction of Christianity and ultimate Catholicism. He felt he had cut his way out of the encirclement, and was not caught yet. With all respect for his genius and sincerity, he had the air of one delightedly doing a bolt, before anybody could say to him, "Why do we not join the Catholic Church?"

Now, I have noted first this common consciousness of the challenge of the Church, because I believe it to be connected with something else. That something else is the strongest of all the purely intellectual forces that dragged me toward the truth. It is not merely the survival of the faith, but the singular nature of its survival. I have called it by conventional phrase the old religion. But it is not an old religion; it is a religion that refuses to grow old. At this moment of history it is a very young religion; rather especially a religion of young men. It is much newer than the new religion; its young men are more fiery, more full of their subject, more eager to explain and argue than were the young Socialists of my own youth. It does not merely stand firm like an old guard; it has recaptured the initiative and is conducting the counterattack. In short, it is what youth always is rightly or wrongly; it is aggressive.

It is this atmosphere of the aggressiveness of Catholicism that has thrown the old intellectuals on the defensive. It is this that has produced the almost morbid self-consciousness of which I have spoken. The converts are truly fighting, in those words which recur like a burden at the opening of the Mass, for a thing which giveth joy to their

Kicking Against The Goad

youth. I cannot understand how this unearthly freshness in something so old can possibly be explained, except on the supposition that it is indeed unearthly.

AN ANGLO-CATHOLIC'S DILEMMA

A. R. BURGESS-BAYLY

I ALWAYS say that there are two incidents in my life, which though unknown to me at the time, had the after-effect of making me a Catholic.

The first was when I was a boy at Westminster School, at the age of sixteen, shortly after my Confirmation. Along with several other boys I had been instructed in a class in preparation for that rite. The teaching given was of the vaguest description, as was also the teaching given in preparation for our First Communion; so that when the Confirmation took place, shortly afterwards to be followed by our First Communion at midday on the following Sunday, I had only the haziest notion of what was really taking place.

Religion at that period of my life possessed but little or no attraction to me. I was frankly bored when Sunday came round. During term time, I would make my Communion at midday at certain stated intervals, more as a matter of duty than anything else. And then the first incident happened which had the effect of altering the whole of my religious outlook.

On going home for the holidays on one occasion, my mother who was a pious "High Anglican" asked me when I made my Communion last, and when I answered that it was at midday on such and such a Sunday, her reply was as follows: "You should never," she said, "make your Communion late. Always go the first thing in the morning, before you have had your breakfast."

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Quite a simple remark in itself, but it started making me think. Why should I go before breakfast? I had not been told that at school. From that day onward, I can date my first initiation into "Anglo-Catholic" principles.

About this time, when I was at home in Brighton for the holidays, I used to hear reports about a certain Vicar of a church situated at the other end of the town — "The Little Church on the Hill," as it was affectionately called, The Church of the Annunciation. The Vicar was certainly a very remarkable man. He had the reputation of being a saint. And even after all these years, I am able to look back and say that I have never quite found his equal.

I met him only once, and that was on the Sunday before his death when he was in the last throes of consumption. But the little conversation I had with him has left a lasting impression upon my mind which no amount of time will ever efface, for it was to his teaching and above all his example that I am indebted for my first grasp of Catholic principles. For it was there that I learned to make my first Confession, and it was in that church that I realized — not in its fullness, but at any rate in part, what the Catholic Faith meant — what it expects of you. May he rest in peace! He had his three wishes granted him, viz.: to die on a Friday; between the hours of twelve and three, like his Divine Master before him; and amongst his own people.

In course of time I was ordained deacon by another remarkable man in his way, Bishop King of Lincoln. He, too, was a saintly man, loved by all, rich and poor alike. When I was a student at Lincoln, I was in the habit of going to Confession to him. He had his own prejudices. He had a great devotion to our Lord's presence in the Blessed Sacrament. He would inculcate the practice of Confession and opportunities were given to the candidates on the eve of their ordination to make their Confession. But he had a wholesome dread of anything that he would

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term distinctively "Roman." I well remember, on the eve of my ordination to the "priesthood" how he called me aside and lectured me very strongly on the practice of the invocation of the saints, a lecture which was occasioned by the fact that my Rector had, in the church where I was curate during the first year of my diaconate, erected a picture of the Blessed Virgin Mary with a couple of candles on each side of it, and the matter had been reported to him by the Archdeacon.

My next sphere of work was in a county town in Cornwall, where I had as my Vicar, the late Bishop of ——. I fear I was rather a thorn in his side. The services at the parish church were ritualistic, but at the Mission Church of St. Leonard's we were in all things the most "Roman." Although I was nothing in the way of a preacher, I was an indefatigable visitor — believing in the old adage that "A house-going parson makes a churchgoing people." It was certainly so at St. Leonard's, and in spite of my "Roman" ways, I received a letter from the Bishop of the Diocese complimenting me on my pastoral activities.

But what was to be a matter of far greater satisfaction than even a Bishop's letter was the saying of old Mrs. ———, a regular member of the congregation. "Lor', he do antic, but there we love him so much that we all antic with him!"

My next curacy, after a brief spell of work in a mining village in Yorkshire, was at a well-known "Anglo-Catholic" Church in a fashionable health resort. Here at St. John's was "Anglo-Catholicism" at its best. "Daily Mass," "Sung Mass" on Sundays, Confessions with regular hours for hearing them, constituted the normal state of things in the spiritual life of the parish. The Vicar was much sought after as a Confessor. The only fly in the ointment, so far as I myself was concerned, lay in the fact that it was not nearly "Catholic" enough.

I remember on one occasion preaching a sermon on

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devotion to our Lady and advocating the practice of invoking the saints. It gave a great offense to some of the lady members of the congregation and I was consequently reprimanded by the Vicar, who told me quite kindly that although he agreed with the practice of invoking the saints and regularly practised it himself in his private devotions it was not a subject to be taught from the pulpit. One wonders what he would now feel (he has been dead some years, God rest his soul!) for it is now quite a common sight in practically every "Anglo-Catholic" church to see a statue of the Blessed Virgin, St. John's included, and the "Hail Mary" is recited publicly as a matter of course.

It was about this period in my life that I became acquainted with a certain religious community of nuns in the Church of England, who styled themselves "Benedictines." They had come into possession of an old abbey — a Benedictine foundation — at West Malling in Kent. Every year on the Feast of Corpus Christi it was the custom for certain of the "Anglo-Catholic" clergy from various parts of the country to take part in the celebrations that marked the occasion.

One year I was invited to act as subdeacon at the "Mass." There was nothing savoring of Anglicanism at Malling. It was pure, unadulterated "Romanism" from beginning to end. The day began with a series of "Masses" said in the Gate House Chapel, followed by "Solemn High Mass" in Latin in the Abbey itself. This was followed by "Exposition" on the "High Altar" until the afternoon when Vespers was sung and a procession with the "Host" took place in the Abbey grounds, crowds of people taking part, children scattering flowers before the canopy, and followed by the nuns and the Lady Abbess carrying her pastoral staff.

In 1913, the whole of the Community was received into the Catholic Church.

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I now come to the last period of my sojourn in the Church of England. During the last two years I spent in her ministry, I was given the sole charge of a Mission Church in one of the London suburbs, under the title of the "Church of the Holy Cross." A fit title, it would appear, for what was about to follow! For it was here that my troubles were to begin in real earnest.

I had always believed that I was a priest. For thirteen years of my ministry in the Church of England, I believed without a shadow of doubt that I had the power of offering the Holy Sacrifice, the power of forgiving sins, besides other powers which every Catholic priest possesses.

And then one day, I was consulted by a member of my flock about a certain difficulty which he had. It was concerning one of the 39 Articles of Religion which every clergyman on undertaking duty in a fresh place has to express his assent to from the pulpit of the parish church on the first Sunday after his induction to the curacy.

It runs as follows:

"I, ———, do solemnly make the following Declaration. I assent to the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, and to the Book of Common Prayer, and of the Ordering of Bishops, Priests and Deacons. I believe the Doctrine of the Church of England as therein set forth, to be agreeable to the Word of God; and in Public Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments I will use the form in the said Book prescribed, and none other, except so far as shall be ordered by lawful Authority."

The difficulty in my questioner's mind had to do with the thirty-first of these articles, which runs thus. It has to do with the Mass.

"The Sacrifices of Masses in which it was commonly said that the Priest did offer Christ for the quick and the dead; to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits."

Now, I knew quite well that the interpretation put

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upon these words by "Anglo-Catholic" writers is something to this effect, viz.: that the Article in question does not *condemn* the doctrine of the Sacrifice of the Mass as it is commonly understood, but it only condemns an abuse of that doctrine which was current at the time when these Articles were drawn up.

How plausible it sounded, but was it true? It didn't satisfy my questioner. Did it really satisfy me? Well, it made me think. What were the views of the writers of the Articles themselves? Did they believe in the Mass at all? I turned to their writings. They spoke of the Mass in the most blasphemous of terms. Nay, their own actions confirmed their words. Why were the altars cast down and tables substituted in their place? Why were the very altar stones themselves turned into sinks and troughs or laid in the porches of the churches, so that men might, on entering them, tread them underfoot?

After all "it is the Mass that matters." The Church of England may be orthodox so far as her formularies are concerned with such doctrines as Baptismal Regeneration and Confession. She may even believe in a real presence in Holy Communion. But "it is the Mass that matters." Does she believe in the Mass?

And then it was that I turned to the Service for the Ordination of a priest in the Book of Common Prayer. This at any rate would show what the mind of the Church of England really was. I made a study of it. I compared it with the *Pontificale* from which it had its origin. In some things it was similar, but alas! there was this one great difference. All trace of anything relating to sacrifice had been obliterated. The whole thing was so obvious. The Church of England had no use for the Mass.

Even the "Judicious Hooker" in his work *Ecclesiastical Polity*, which we were required to study for the priest's examination by such a Catholic-minded prelate as Bishop King of Lincoln, expresses it quite clearly:

"Sacrifice," he says, "is no part of the Church's ministry, for the Gospel hath properly no sacrifice." Yet the word *priest*, he goes on to say, may be retained without harm, for when men hear it, it "draweth no more their minds to any cogitation of sacrifice than the name of a senator or of an alderman causeth them to think on old age."

Could anything be clearer and is it not all in accordance with the mind of Archbishop Cranmer who wrote as follows in his work *The Lord's Supper*, Bk. V? "As for the saying or singing of Mass by the priest, as it was in times past used, it is neither a sacrifice propitiatory nor yet a sacrifice of laud or thanksgiving, nor in any wise allowed before God, but abominable and detestable."

As Pope Leo XIII expressed it when he declared against the validity of Anglican Orders in 1896, the Anglican Ordinal is defective alike in its "form" and in its "intention."

Consequently, if there is no Sacrifice, there can be no Priest. And from that day onward, I knew in my innermost heart that I was no real priest.

And so the great change came. It was on September 14th that we were keeping the Feast of the Title (The Exaltation of the Holy Cross). Just two Sundays remained before I severed connection with the Church of England, so far as any active work was concerned. But those two Sundays were a veritable nightmare. No one but myself knew what was passing through my mind, for as one put on the priestly vestments and ascended the altar steps to offer up what one had always believed to be the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, again and again, the thought would keep recurring, "You are no *real* priest."

Shortly afterwards I was received into the Catholic Church. A period of temporary estrangement took place between me and my relations. I was told that my being "received" into the "Roman Church" was only a passing

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phase, that a few months would see me back again in the Church of England. Others regarded me as a traitor for having, as they expressed it, deserted "The Church of your Baptism." Friends whom I had not seen or heard for many a long year suddenly became interested on my behalf. "I hope," wrote one, "you will speedily return to our fold. Surely the Church of England is wide enough for us all. Many join the Roman Church for a time and then are glad to return. I feel strongly that you have made a mistake but it can be so easily rectified as is so frequently done."

Another friend, an Anglican Sister, wrote to me as follows, speaking of the Rector of the parish in which she lived, the said Rector being a man of the most "advanced" type of "Anglo-Catholicism," and whose ritual and teaching was "Roman" in the extreme:

"Father G—— sent a message. You know how blunt and determined he is. 'Tell him that I hope he will soon repent of the error of his ways. I say this in all charity.' I have never in my life come across anyone so dead against 'Papists' as he calls all Roman Catholics."

Very different was the letter I received from a priest who had apostatized from the Catholic Church, but who at the end of his life, eight years afterwards, was reconciled and died a most edifying death. "I feel sure, dear friend," he wrote, "you have obeyed your conscience. . . . It is not for me to judge, and I do know and believe you have not considered the consequences here of doing what you thought would bring you peace with God. You can have no idea how kindly B —— (my Vicar) and his wife spoke of you. Not a shadow of resentment, no controversy, only real kindness toward a friend who rightly or wrongly had done what he thought right."

The Bishop of the diocese wrote very kindly on the matter to my Vicar.

"This is indeed a blow in itself, and for what else it

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may imply; for the going of a man who has done good work and got influence may well imply more. Taken together with another secession to which you refer of a man who worked not far from you, it is very damaging to our position."

And so I bring this short story to a conclusion. Two years afterwards to the very day, our youngest child was received into the Catholic Church, to be followed four months later by her mother and the two other children.

After all, the Bishop was not very far wrong in what he wrote, for since these events took place, forty or more members of that congregation have since become Catholics. *Laus Deo Semper.*

And now, after twenty-three years have passed, I am able to look back and thank Almighty God from the bottom of my heart for having bestowed upon me the greatest of all blessings, that of being a member, although an all unworthy one, of the True Church of Jesus Christ.

IN SEARCH OF COMMUNION

SHANE LESLIE

IT IS very hard to give one reason for becoming a Catholic when it is easier to mention a thousand small ones. People become Catholics for so many reasons. I have known men to give quite opposite reasons: one did so as the result of reading the infidel Gibbon and another through reading the Protestant version of the Bible, another through love of Gothic architecture, and another through love of Gregorian music.

I was brought up a Protestant in Northern Ireland with every privilege and pleasure that a boy could wish. The Catholic religion I heard of as something rather wicked and quite exploded. The first time I was driven past the local Catholic Seminary the driver pointed it out as a place where blind priests made poor boys as blind as themselves. He meant theologically blind but I thought they blinded them with hot irons like Hubert and Arthur in Shakespeare and was frightened out of my skin. The only other thing I heard about Catholics in my youth was that they were a queer sect who to make beautiful churches never hesitated to make themselves bankrupt!

In Protestant Ireland there was a gulf between Catholic and Protestant. My great-grandfather had fought Elections against O'Connell, but he had a good side since he refused all bribes to vote for the Union with England.

When I became a Catholic in 1908, I received an unexpected letter from a cousin, the late Lady Sykes, who wrote to me: "Your great-grandfather was the only rich

landlord in the North of Ireland who refused a Union peerage and voted against that infamous bill. Well there's been a blessing on it: all his grandchildren and great-grandchildren by his first marriage are Catholics and by his second marriage he has already seven Catholic descendants."

My great-grandmother built Protestant churches and schools but she also built a number of Catholic schools on her Donegal estates a hundred years ago. An old priest told me that he believed that as a result her descendants had become Catholics, thanks to the prayers of the Catholics who had saved their Faith in these schools at a time when Irish schools were used to pervert the impoverished Catholics from their religion. I mention this because it has a mystic bearing on my own conversion and I like to think that it came about through good deeds of others in the past as well as to the close reading and study I gave to the Catholic problem when I went to Cambridge University.

The great Cardinals Manning and Newman had died by then, but I heard their names for the first time and began to read Newman. There were passages which lifted me off my feet but though I gathered many Catholic flowers from his pages, I was content to remain till I was 21 in the Church of England which offered services and music and a beauty based on Catholic practice. It is difficult to describe what a hold the English Church had on lovers of history and ritual. The old Catholic buildings were in Anglican hands and though the Services could be depressingly Low, it was often possible to restore the old form of worship. How exciting it was to us Ritualists to see the lights relit on the old altar or the incense burnt in some old church where it had not been dreamed of for nearly four hundred years.

Ever since Cardinal Newman had tried to walk the *via media* thousands of Anglicans had followed in his path.

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Not all had followed him to his logical conclusions and submitted to the Pope but the most general method of becoming a Catholic in my time was to take a course of reading Newman. His name was still magic and even the sadness of his published life has never dulled the confidence and hope with which his writings are still read. I found myself charmed and fascinated and began to make further inquiries. We used to enjoy the full Catholic ritual with Mass and Confession in our Anglican churches. Unfortunately there was a snag and that was that which Pope Leo XIII had declared, with personal reluctance, as the result of a deep searching commission, that Anglican orders were not valid. Therefore the absolution we received was not a sacramental grace and, deeply reverent though we felt, we could not be certain that the Eucharist was consecrated except by a formula of good and comfortable words. Here was the problem in a nutshell and it gave great distress to many. I was fortunate to meet two Anglican clergymen at Cambridge who had solved the question by becoming Catholic priests: the late Monsignor Robert Hugh Benson, who was actually the son of an Archbishop of Canterbury, and Monsignor Arthur Barnes, the great archeologist of the Early Church.

Monsignor Benson was then preaching in Cambridge with all his emotional powers, but it was Monsignor Barnes who could answer inquiries which went to the root of the matter. Benson made me long to become a Catholic, but I was unwilling to take the step until I had lost all historical faith in Anglican orders. Monsignor Barnes had made a deep study of the subject and while investigating the original documents came to the conclusion that the records had been tampered with and that Bishop Barlow, through whom the Apostolic Succession was claimed by the Church of Canterbury, had not been a real Catholic bishop at all!

There was another interesting point. What were our relations with the great Greek Orthodox Church, whose orders Rome herself acknowledged as true? Our theory was the branch theory that the Christian Catholic Church had been divided by the course of events into three main branches: Rome, Canterbury, and Constantinople. The Orthodox Church gave us far more encouragement than the Church of Rome. Greek prelates constantly appeared in Anglican churches and were received with full honors. We insisted that this entailed intercommunion. Had we been in real communion with the Greek, our position would have been very much stronger. As soon as my Cambridge course was over, I determined to make the test and set out on a journey to Russia. I felt confused with the controversy and I decided that if the Greek authorities allowed me to receive Holy Communion as an Anglican according to the Greek rite I would remain where I was, but, if they refused me, I would seek entry into the Church of the Popes.

In 1907 I made the trip to Moscow and Petersburg. I believe a great many enthusiasts have made the journey since in search of Communism but I am one of the very few who went there in search of Communion. The result was that though the Greek clergy were very kind and sympathetic, they could not give me full Communion. They looked on the Church of England as a part of the Latin Church which had broken away. We were expected to make our peace with Rome, not with Moscow or the Holy Synod, if Christendom was ever to be reunited.

When I returned to England I studied and accepted the full Catholic creed. I felt that I had read and studied as much as I could be expected to do and I turned to the mystical side of the Church. Visits to great Carthusian monasteries assured me of a life supernatural in our midst. Problems which still troubled me I was willing to leave simply to the thousands of better brains who for

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centuries had combined to discover the best results in theology and philosophy. It was logical that by individual efforts I could not presume to think that I could ever be right in contradiction to them. This consensus of the Church is what finally brought me into the Catholic religion. This was at Easter, 1908.

JOY COMETH IN THE MORNING

MAC FARLANE-BARROW

YOU ask me for a brief account of the reasons which led up to my conversion to the Catholic Faith. I am highly honored that you should wish to place my experience on permanent record. At the same time, I should shrink from doing so were it not that a conversion is not a private matter, neither is it right to try to make it so. It is an instance of the generosity of Almighty God, and, for that reason, if for no other, deserves to be published to the end that His alone may be the glory, and the furtherance of His Kingdom on earth the sole object of the publication.

To give you, as it were, a frame in which to set the details of my conversion, I may say that I was brought up under the influence of the Oxford Movement. Readers of this account may not know that the above is the recognized name, in this country, for that striving after Catholic truth which was the greatest feature of the Anglican "church" during the nineteenth century, and which has been the means of bringing into the Catholic Church so many of the Anglican clergy and laity, of whom Cardinal Newman is the outstanding example. When I took orders, as the Anglican expression is, it was in that branch of the Anglican community known as The Episcopal Church in Scotland, a body which is autonomous, i.e., although in communion with the Church of England, the Archbishop of Canterbury has no jurisdiction in Scotland.

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For nearly eighteen years I ministered to country congregations in the Highlands of Scotland. My teaching was of the "High Church" order, e.g., the absolute importance of apostolical succession with the threefold orders, Bishop, Priest, and Deacon, believing that the Anglicans had maintained a true succession. I taught that in our Holy Communion service there was a sacrifice, and that I, with every Anglican priest, was a sacrificing priest. I firmly believed in, and taught, the Real Presence of our Lord in our Sacrament of Holy Communion, which I did not scruple to call the Mass. With scant success, I admit, I taught people to come to Confession. To Catholics it is generally news that the Anglican church has any doctrine of Confession and Absolution by a priest. For the information of my readers, I would like to make this point clear, as it will help them to see how easy it is for a convert "High" Church man to accept the Catholic doctrine, upon being received into the Church. Hear then the Book of Common Prayer (the Anglican's one and only official guide to Doctrine). In the service for the Visitation of the Sick the following rubric occurs:

"Here shall the sick person be moved to make a special confession of his sins, if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter. After which confession, the Priest shall absolve him (if he humbly and heartily desire it) after this sort:

"Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left power to his Church to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in him, of his great mercy forgive thee thine offences: And by his authority committed to me, I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

Over and above this instance from the Visitation of the Sick, a definite commission to absolve from or retain sins is given by the Bishop at the Ordaining of Priests.

Now you will pardon me for dwelling on this, because, although (as I have said) it makes it easy for a "High" Church man to accept the doctrine of Penance, on his being received into the Church, it also acts as a hindrance to others. That crying need for all mankind, viz., confession of sin, with forgiveness, authoritative and all-embracing, is met, and apparently, comforted, in the Anglican church, and the devout Anglican says, "I have found Him whom my soul loveth, what more can Rome offer me?"

But, undoubtedly, above all, the one great devotion of the earnest High Church Anglican, is to the Mass, even though he may never call it by this name. Throughout my career, as a minister, I can see that this devotion was always increasing in intensity in myself, and it was along this line that I was led by the grace of God to see where the Truth really lay.

During the last twelve months or so of my ministry, I had (along with many others, no doubt) been suffering the utmost pain and misery at the public declarations of an English Bishop, Barnes, of Birmingham. I asked myself again and again, "Is it possible to remain in communion with one who is allowed to continue in his office whilst making these blasphemous utterances?" Of course, even Bishop Barnes and his fulminations is no new thing in the Anglican establishment; there have been dignitaries in every generation since it was founded who have said and done things which have shocked their co-religionists, but, personally, I had not come up against anything so disquieting as the Birmingham prelate's public speeches, and I felt convinced that cost what it might, I could not stay in the Anglican church. Accordingly, I told my own Bishop, the Anglican Bishop of Argyll and the Isles, one of the kindest and most sympathetic of men. He lent me some books which he thought would calm my troubled mind. I read them. One was Bishop

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Gore's *Roman Catholic Claims*. Bishop Gore was a "High" Church man, and I had read many of his books with profit, but I now also read for the first time Newman's *Apologia*, and I seemed to see clearly then that my case was his, and the false position of the Anglican church stood revealed.

As regards the Catholic Church, my chief difficulty lay in the fact that I had no knowledge of her. I had once, as a boy, been in the Church of St. Gudule in Brussels, and I had been recently to Benediction in a Glasgow church, otherwise I knew nothing about even the interior of a Catholic Church.

As regards Catholic Doctrine, I seem to have imbibed the main principles, but I shied at the Doctrine of Papal Infallibility, simply because I did not know anything about it! At the same time, I did not accept the coming change of faith with avidity, far from it. My whole nature recoiled at the thought of giving up my profession (being a married man with a young family, any idea of the priesthood was out of the question). There was also the inborn prejudice of generations of Protestantism. All that had ever been impressed upon me of the sly, surreptitious ways of Catholics made me shudder at this leap in the dark. There was also that fearful bogie, Disloyalty, looming in my thoughts, waking and sleeping. (I expect it is the experience of many converts, but if all have the sort of hideous dreams I went through, a collection of these experiences, published in book form, would make a certain "best seller" amongst stories of the grotesque!) But, without any jest, the devil is always enraged over a conversion and does his utmost to punish the convert. It is the trial of faith, and when it is past, one can only marvel and thank God.

Of all the diabolical whisperings, the one which stands out as having caused me the most agony of mind was this: "You have believed in the Real Presence of Christ in the

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Sacrament, as you have known it. You have adored Him in that Sacrament. Now you are going to say that that was all a mistake, that you were deluded. What guarantee have you that you will ever again be able to believe in the Real Presence, even in the Church into which you are going?" The thought that one was in risk of losing all one had hitherto held most dear was an exquisite agony.

The separation from one's relatives is a very sore trial, especially as the ones formerly one's allies, in matters of faith, have become the ones most distant now.

Protestants are not, as a rule, brought up to study the lives of the saints, and I knew very little, as a consequence, of the life of abnegation embraced by so many Catholics, but I do remember that, as I was waiting in my rectory in the very village where I had been a minister, for the publication by my Bishop in my church of the first news of my renunciation of my former allegiance, there rang through me from day to day, and hour to hour, that, for the furtherance of God's Kingdom there must be crucifixions. And I clung to that thought even when I felt that the whole of my existence was being blotted out.

"Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." I cannot conclude without saying that during the five years since my conversion, four of my friends, at different times and without any word first spoken by me on the subject, have come into the Church. One of these was received last year — another had been an Anglican minister, who on my going to call on him in a friendly way six months after my own conversion, told me, with no little warmth, that he considered me a Judas Iscariot. So wonderfully does our God work, and so earnestly do His saints intercede for us. *Laus Deo.*

ROMANCE, LUNACY, OR WHAT?

PROFESSOR ERNST M. ROLOFF

DURING my life I have often unintentionally been involved in the religious difficulties of my fellow men. This should enable me to write copiously of the motley and sometimes curious and even comical reasons which lead men to faith or unbelief. As I review today in retrospect, at the ripe age of 67, my own religious development, it would seem that the following experience vitally influenced my subsequent life.

As a student of Protestant theology I spent my first two semesters in Leipsic where I was befriended by the brilliant and influential Professor, Dr. Christoph Ernst Luthardt, the leader of orthodox Protestantism and representative of the school of Erlangen. Having appointed me an honorary member on the editorial staff of the Protestant church paper *Allgemeine Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirchenzeitung*, he likewise afforded me occasionally an opportunity to be present at the learned conversations he was wont to have with men such as Dr. Franz Delitsch, the greatest Hebrew scholar of his day and translator of the New Testament into Hebrew, and with the genial Dr. Gustav Adolf Fricke.

On one of these occasions a hot dispute arose over a theological question. At this Luthardt took an old tome from his library and, after glancing over its contents, read a quotation from Martin Luther. Almost instantaneously the gentlemen calmed down and came to a common agreement. It was then the thought came

to my mind: "Whence does Luther derive such authority that after four hundred years a word from him has the weight of a Bible quotation?" The reflection had hardly occurred to me when it took expression on my lips. Naturally, the gentlemen were surprised. Some were visibly shocked and my host felt constrained to close the discussion with a friendly rebuke. The episode was soon forgotten by the rest, but for me it was the beginning of a new outlook on things.

Unfortunately, neither these informal talks nor the splendid lectures of Luthardt supplied any answer to the paramount and burning questions raised in the recent publication of the *Life of Christ* by the rationalists Bernard Weiss (1882) and Willibald Beyschlag (1885). From a theological point of view the result of my studies in Leipsic was a grand disappointment. I had begun with zest and zeal to study Lutheranism in its purity, in a classical environment, without becoming enthusiastic about it; and my dissatisfaction finally forced me to move to Berlin with a friend. For even at that time it already dawned on me that not orthodox Protestantism, but Protestantism in its modern form, constituted the logical development of the Reformation.

Just at that time the great revolutionary Adolph Harnack of Marburg had received a call to the University of Berlin, after a heated public discussion, which was terminated by a personal decision of the young emperor. After hearing the inaugural discourse of Harnack, in October, 1888, I seldom missed one of his lectures without grave reason. A greater contrast than that between Luthardt and Harnack was scarcely conceivable. While the former graciously, and even with an air of superiority, passed over objections of opponents, the latter became a most formidable and dangerous innovator who took nothing for granted, but weighed everything most critically.

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His dogmatic-historical lectures in particular attracted me and I had soon mastered his *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte*, the third volume of which came off the press just at the end of my third year in Berlin. I read the book eye to eye with the rationalistic professor, Heinrich Holtzman of Strassbourg, looking upon it as an example "of the gripping and alarming exposition of the ravages to which the contents of the New Testament were reduced after it had once been drawn into the stream of popular Hellenism."

And yet, despite all, something in the depths of my soul continually revolted against this modern trend in theology. Moreover, philosophical reasoning forbade me to accept as final the inconceivability of all transcendental truths and the inference of danger lurking in every metaphysical speculation, which made it impossible to make a definite statement concerning God and Christ. I was not content to view Christ merely as a subjective conception or an act of the human will.

When Albrecht Ritschl, the teacher of Harnack, in utter disregard of all dogma put religion on a purely practical basis, so that nothing remained of it but "the faithful discharge of our daily duties, sanctified by the belief in the providence of God, who even without the vicarious death of Christ on the cross would grant forgiveness for unwittingly committed sins," I already realized then that such a teaching could not permanently satisfy me. I anticipated, as it were, the ultimate difficulty, which later on, in 1892, upset the public during the so-called *Apostolikumstreit*: the discrepancy existing between the theological theory of Ritschl-Harnack and the future profession of its adherents as ministers of the gospel and pedagogues. How could I profess adherence to the Apostles' Creed in my official capacity, if according to the theory of these two men this attitude was irreconcilable with the original teachings of Jesus Christ?

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How could I escape the dilemma which made me a virtual prisoner?

A return to Luther whose authority has been systematically destroyed was altogether out of question, while I had never given a thought to the Catholic Church. Thus I became more and more engulfed in the negation of everything. In consequence, my departure from Berlin, which I had entered with such great hopes was fraught with the realization that this experience had not brought me the expected positive gain, but on the contrary had scattered my dogmatic convictions to the wind. A hard and bitter lot indeed!

In order to evade as far as possible these steadily increasing theological difficulties, I studied classical philology and simultaneously passed the philosophical examination shortly after completing my theological dissertation. My negative attitude toward all fixed creeds made me realize clearly that the ministry could never be my profession. In seeking a suitable occupation I therefore accepted a position as tutor during a period of two years, in a fashionable home in the Neumark. A Sunday school, which I opened for about sixty children of both sexes, proved a successful venture, but augmented my inner difficulties. My experience at a public school, where I was asked to teach religion in all classes on account of my former theological studies, caused me the same perplexity.

I made it a point to prepare well for these classes, for I was of the opinion that religion should be taught so interestingly as to become the best liked subject of all, lest the product of this education be a generation hostile to the church. Moreover I had arranged for private talks with pupils from the higher grades, who made good use of this opportunity to ask personal questions. My own past had taught me the importance of such confidential talks. But alas! in the course of time I found myself

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confronted with serious difficulties in these private interviews! To have to unburden myself before these young people of my own troubled state of mind, which harassed me for years, would have been unpardonable on my part.

My faith in religious truths had been completely undermined and I was involved in a darkness which made me shudder. The only thing salvaged from my spiritual shipwreck was a belief in the lasting values of the "moral philosophy of the Sermon on the Mount." Under these circumstances my misfortune was that I had no one in whom I could confide. Only my mother, who lived with me for five years during the time I taught at Lebus, knew of my plight and comforted me. After her demise, which occurred in 1896 — she died a saintly death and in her were verified once more the words of St. Augustine, that "many who seem to be outside the Church are within her fold" — I was all alone.

What "positive" results a serious talk with others might have had, became evident from the repeated remarks of my colleagues from Berlin, to the effect that I should quit worrying about theological negations as long as my faith remained beyond controversy.

It is not possible here to dwell at length on theological questions, nor is this intended to be a dogmatical or theological treatise. I may not, however, leave unnoticed the turning point of my life. During this period of distress a friend of mine, engaged in the medical profession, paid me a visit. He noticed at once the change I had undergone and asked for an explanation. Naturally, I hesitated to divulge my troubles and to admit my complete spiritual bankruptcy, knowing that my friend was a Catholic. After listening to my complaint, that I had sought in vain to find satisfaction in Protestantism, he asked: "Have you ever read a standard Catholic work?" I had not — and, to be candid, the thought of doing so had not even occurred to me. For the average Protestant the

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occupation with things Catholic is tantamount to a lowering of intellectual standards. Still I was aware of the absurdity of isolating myself from a religion which had given the world a Michelangelo, a Raphael, and men such as Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Eichendorf, Bruckner, Pasteur, etc. Consequently I did not hesitate to inquire of my friend what book he would suggest. He mentioned Adam Möhler's *Symbolik*, and promised to send the same immediately upon his return home.

I read the book with gusto, and found that it compared favorably with the best works of Protestants on the same subject. In fact it surpassed most of them in its harmonious synthesis.

It is not to be taken for granted, however, that this work at once converted me into a Catholic. And yet I had come out of my shell and was now ready for further Catholic literature. The publication *Pastor Bonus*, founded in 1889 by Professor Dr. Einig of Treves, rendered me most valuable service in the selection of reading material. With its aid I soon familiarized myself with Catholic authors, who until then had been unknown to me. What struck me most in their works was the wonderful uniformity of their opinion and the immovable foundation on which their argumentation rested. After all I had witnessed of the subjective vagaries of modern Protestantism and the state of anarchy prevalent in the modern systems of philosophy, these Catholic books gave me again that feeling of peaceful security which I had lost in Berlin.

Thus the "all-time low" of my development had been passed and I was gradually working my way upward through years of quiet study. My fatherly friend, the saintly Franciscan Ignatius Jeiler of Quaracchi, near Florence, Italy (whose hospitality I later enjoyed for months and whose classical edition of the works of St. Bonaventure even merited praise from the distinguished

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Harnack), told me long years after that my religious development had been the most logical and consequential he could imagine. In fact I can feel no little satisfaction at viewing the straight path which led directly from the harmonious and religious environments of my father's home to my present belief.

Many difficulties, nevertheless, still remained to be overcome. Regular informative talks with educated Catholics were a necessity, and unfortunately an opportunity for such conversation in my Protestant surroundings was lacking altogether. Once only, during my stay in Braunschweig, did I furtively attend a low Mass in a Catholic church with the result that I was promptly reprimanded by my authorities, who expressed great surprise at my untoward behavior. Comparatively much greater difficulties arose, however, from the aforementioned private chats with pupils. Since their questions were mostly of a religious nature, one can easily surmise the embarrassment they caused me.

The strain finally became so great that insomnia set in and an old throat affliction incapacitated me to such an extent that I was hardly able to speak and carry on my schoolwork. It was daily coming clearer to me that I would be granted no respite from this task unless I took recourse to some drastic measures. But what was I to do? Fortunately a letter received by me about this time from the Protestant pastor of St. Mary's Church in Berlin, whom I had befriended, solved the problem. I was invited to take over temporarily a German school in Cairo, Egypt. This offer greatly appealed to me. I accepted at once, and after dismissal from my Berlin post I soon left for Egypt.

On settling down in Cairo I quickly made the acquaintance of various Catholic religious. In particular I felt myself drawn to the sons of St. Francis, who had been the object of my veneration for a long time. In

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Palestine, which I visited during vacation, I came into further contact with Franciscan Fathers and experienced a state of religious exhilaration such as I had never known before. I did not yet realize at that time what an important role the good Friars were to play in my life. My religious development had come to a close and all that was needed now, as I felt, was the guidance of a capable man to direct my ship to a safe port.

This help came to me in the nick of time, and quite providentially on the very day I embarked for Europe. Standing on deck of the *Semiramis*, in the harbor of Alexandria, I glanced at the passengers coming up the gangplank when suddenly I spied a gray-haired Friar whose features impressed me greatly. I felt as if a voice within me spoke: "This is the man you are awaiting." Since the Friar, who was designated on the passenger list merely as "Padre Bernardo da Roma," was assigned a place at the same table with me, we soon were friends. During the three-day journey before reaching Brindisi, where Padre Bernardo intended to take the train to Rome, I was privileged to associate with this learned religious who had just completed the visitation of the Franciscan monasteries in Egypt and Palestine. He was destined to become shortly bishop of Sutri and Nepi in the vicinity of Rome.

Bidding me farewell at midnight, on the dock of Brindisi, he tendered me his card with the invitation to visit him in Rome at my earliest convenience. My trip, however, led me to Venice where I intended to acclimatize myself before returning to Germany, but an unusually cold April drove me back to Florence. Since, therefore, the inclement weather had forced me so far south I decided that I might now make the promised visit to Padre Bernardo and disclose my state of mind to him. During the ocean trip I had not once made mention of my spiritual difficulties.

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To the present day it remains inexplicable to me how it was that I lost Padre Bernardo's card, which he had handed to me in the darkness of the night. Be that as it may, I neither knew his full name nor his address on my arrival in Rome. Only after days of searching did I discover him in the Monastery of the Irish Franciscans, Sant' Isidoro on the Pincio, under the name of Father Bernard Döbbing, a native of Münster in Westfalia. His joy on seeing me was great, but still greater was his surprise on learning that I was a Protestant. After an hour's conversation he made the conclusive remark: "If you are convinced of all you have said, you *are* a Catholic and must act accordingly."

Nevertheless, Father Bernard Döbbing kept putting off my reception into the Church for four months, during which time he instructed me thoroughly in the tenets of the Faith. I make mention of this fact because of the current opinion among non-Catholics that the Church is ever lying in ambush "to make a catch." On July 29, 1899, I made my profession of faith in the presence of Archbishop Costantini, Father Döbbing, and the superior of the house, Monsignor Onesti. On the same day I received my First Holy Communion.

Following an invitation of the Irish Franciscans, who were extremely kind to me, I took up quarters in Sant' Isidoro where I made myself useful as organist and had occasion to learn the beauty of Catholic divine services. I lived in the monastery for four weeks in voluntary confinement, without writing one letter or leaving the premises once. After all the unrest of the last months and years I yearned for the peaceful fruition of the gifts which had come to me after such prolonged turmoil. How often in the past had I not longed for an opportunity of private confession! Even Goethe numbers confession among those things "which should not have been taken from us," and Luther himself, in his later

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life, referred to this institution as "an excellent, precious, and comforting thing."

The privilege of frequent Communion was now mine — the surpassing joy of frequent and even daily Communion which is the incomparable boon of all Catholics! Moreover, the close association with the Fathers of Sant' Isidoro familiarized me with real Catholic practice, for I was well aware that the profession of faith could be but the introductory step into the fullness of Catholic life.

Whilst I enjoyed the peace of Sant' Isidoro, the newspapers in distant Germany kept the public in a state of excitement regarding my conversion. A press reporter, one who could hear the grass growing, had gotten wind of my conversion, and without previously contacting me sent a distorted account to the Berlin papers. As a result countless letters of friends and pupils came pouring in at my *ritiro*.

It is surprising how shockingly little even the well-meaning non-Catholics know of Catholicism, not to mention the enemies of every positive religion. The main cause of this lack of understanding is to be found in the boundless ignorance on their part of all things Catholic. I tried to answer, with every possible forbearance, all letters, many of which contained expressions of sincere grief. Of the three customary appellations for converts — lunatic, place-hunter, and romantic zealot — it seems that I merited the last-named epithet. In connection with my conversion mention, namely, was made of the beautiful niece of a cardinal. In short, it remained incomprehensible how a serious-minded man could embrace the Catholic Faith after ten years of study. It dawned on nobody that the Church might after all be quite different from what she is charged to be. Still, to the credit of my friends be it said that all renewed their friendship after a lapse of time.

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Some objections to my conversion were of such a kind that they needed no refutation. One of the arguments was that to change one's faith like a garment gives evidence of a lack of principle. Under certain circumstances that may be true. However, this does not imply that those who always stubbornly adhere to their opinion are the most honest and intelligent. If that were the case progress would be impossible. After all, the Reformation itself was accomplished by men "who changed their faith like a garment." As for another argument which referred to a break of family tradition, it reminds me of the answer Count Leopold zu Stolberg gave Frederic William III of Prussia when the latter remarked: "I do not like people who become unfaithful to the faith of their fathers." Stolberg promptly retorted: "Neither do I, your Majesty, that's why I returned to the faith of my fathers." To what after all does family tradition amount in the case of religion? The renowned historian W. H. Riehl answers the question: "Why am I a Protestant?" with the frank admission: "Because my parents were Protestants." Such an attitude was already condemned by Confucius when he said: "To see the right thing and to fail to do it is lack of courage."

I am in the rare position of being able to trace back my ancestors with documentary evidence to the year 1483, and it thrills me to know that I am of one faith with my forefathers. To be sure, I have suffered much on account of my conversion, even on the part of Catholics, but God be praised for everything! I had sought my luck beyond many mountains and found it where least expected. To walk along straight and sunny paths is nothing unusual, but to climb from the depth of the dark valleys up to the mountaintops, and there to stand, bathed in sunlight, that is bliss indeed! I thank my God that He has led me to these heights where the eternal Truths have become the savor of my life.

BY FORCE OF LOGIC

DR. EXPEDIT SCHMIDT, O.F.M.

WHEN for the first time I felt dissatisfaction with my hereditary Protestant religion and attempted to solve my doubts, I found myself in a quandary. Ever since the days when I had outgrown the more emotional piety of my early youth, which had been nourished in me by a mother of orthodox faith, deep piety, and incidentally of unusual intelligence, I could not recall any complete satisfaction taken by me in any of my religious tendencies. It may be that the reading of pseudoscientific books, published in the spirit of Moleschott and Buechner during the seventies and eighties of the past century, was scarcely conducive to the strengthening of my Faith, but neither did my Faith supply me with the necessary strength successfully to resist influences of this kind.

Religious instruction at high school did not measure up to the demands of my better self. All we were told of God's plan of salvation seemed to me a very whimsical proceeding, without any logical sequence. In the words of Goethe I might have said: "We held the parts in hand, but lacked a spiritual bond." This is not meant as a reflection on my former teachers. They did their very best. But when one of them, with whom I remained in friendly correspondence for many years, once remarked: "At all events our religion is the truest," that statement implied a very relative rating of things in which I desired logical consistency.

It did not dawn, either on my friends or on me, that

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we might possibly find in the Catholic Church what other churches failed to offer. According to our preconceived notions, the Catholic Church was for spiritual paupers, for those who lived upon externals, a quite antiquated form of Christianity. Like most educated Protestants, we were, though quite unwittingly, followers of Hegel, for whom anything settled by a dialectical process was no longer a matter for discussion. During the instruction prior to our confirmation the Catholic Church was mentioned only casually and condescendingly, as an object of slight worth and importance. On the other hand, the unchecked wrath of my personally irreproachable teacher concentrated on Zwingli and Calvin who had also assumed the role of reformers and dared to differ with Martin Luther.

It was that attitude which made me reflective for with which one of these three was the Truth to be found? Who could tell me which one of them was vested with divine authority? Naturally, nobody could answer that question. Since, then, I could not know which one of these men I should believe and trust, I finally believed and trusted none of them. Thus the result of my confirmation instruction was a "confirmation in unbelief." When the profession of faith was made as usual before the altar in the church, I remained silent. I did not want to make this profession, and neither did I want to tell a lie. If my dear mother had not already been seriously ill at that time — she died nine months later — and I had not felt that I would hurt her feelings by absenting myself, I would not have attended the confirmation ceremonies at all. Only for her sake did I participate in the ceremonies without being interested in them.

Personally I was done with every religious belief. I had not discontinued my prayers gradually, as it often happens, but had given up praying on a certain day because of the firm conviction that it was senseless. Of



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course, I did not make mention of it, but even if I had, nobody would have taken notice of it since, with the exception of my mother, scarcely any of my family members and immediate relatives worried much about praying. In spite of this, religious problems still interested me even though my attitude had become that of a skeptic.

Four years later, in the midst of hardship, came the turning point of my life. Thoughts of God passed again through my mind, but still I could not as yet bring myself to utter a prayer. Neither could I make up my mind to enter a Protestant church before whose doors I one day stopped. I retraced my steps and unintentionally entered a Catholic church, merely because its doors stood so invitingly open. Here I heard a sermon on the miraculous draught of fishes, which was quite different from what I had been accustomed to hear. The delivery was by no means an accomplishment of sacred eloquence, but the sermon itself was so impersonal, so appealing in its simplicity, that I at once sensed a difference in spirit. I visited the church a second time and attended Mass, but without understanding it and without praying, merely as a silent observer. Some days after I called at the rectory and confided my leanings toward certain Catholic practices to a priest, but was given such a blunt answer that it banished all I had ever heard about Catholic eagerness for proselytizing. It once for all convinced me of the contrary. "We are in no particular hurry to make people Catholics," the priest had answered with a gruff voice.

But precisely that unfriendly reception produced on me an effect quite opposite to that which might have been expected. One thing at least became apparent: the Catholic Church was quite different from what I had always been told. So I was determined more than ever to know the Catholic Faith, even though I should ulti-

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mately be forced to give it my allegiance. Despite my former disagreeable experience I called at the rectory again. This time I succeeded in getting a small Catechism which I studied carefully. I was no little struck at first by the seeming arrogance of the Church in calling herself "the pillar and foundation of Truth." This attitude at first seemed to me overbearing and presumptuous, for I had until then considered the Catholic Church as "one among many." On the other hand I was no less impressed by the very different spirit which prevailed here from that which I had experienced in the Protestant church, where nobody really could say which of the so-called Reformers had been on the right track. At all events I considered myself under moral obligation to acquire a good knowledge of this Church. I had not as yet forced myself to prayer. I took up this habit again some time later in a Catholic hospital where prayers were said in common.

God was good to me. He led me — not always over smooth roads — into the hands of a Catholic priest who was destined to prepare me for my reception into the Church. Many years later, people who had been told of my conversion, remembered to have heard the priest declare how stubbornly I had insisted upon clear proofs in support of the divine authority of the Church. After this had been done, everything else followed quite naturally. The logic of Catholic doctrine, if this expression be permitted, led me into the Catholic Church, just as the lack of logic drove me away from Protestantism. At the time of my conversion I was nineteen, and to this day I have not regretted for a single moment that I then followed the superior logic of Catholic dogma or, should I say, the superior promptings of God's grace?

A WORLD WAR VETERAN

EDUARD SCHAEFFER, M.D.

THE writer of this article was born as the fifth child of parents to whom children were dear. His home was located in a friendly country town, within the confines of the former County Ravensberg, which held a population predominantly Protestant. The untimely death of his beloved father induced the mother to dispose of her country home and settle in a near-by city in order to give her children the advantage of a better education. In these new environments of a fast-growing industrial center our education in the elementary as well as high school was conducted wholly in the spirit of Protestantism.

Anti-Catholic prejudices, which are passed on as an heirloom from one generation to another, soon became engrafted in our young hearts. As a result the general impression given us of the Catholic Church was that of an antiquated institution encumbered with many superstitious beliefs and practices. Experience teaches that even dissatisfied Protestants tenaciously cling to this belief, a fact which explains their reluctance to seek for truth in the Catholic fold.

Religious instruction at high school received attention inversely to our advance in grades. At the elementary schools we had been tutored by deeply religious teachers, but at high school our training was left to more or less liberal-minded instructors whose vast knowledge and experience was generally restricted to a single field of science. The study of German classics, moreover, was not

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exactly conducive to the strengthening of a faltering faith. In the perusal of Schiller's works expressions such as, "Rousseau, who makes men out of Christians," or the poem beginning "When you still ruled the beautiful world," did not escape my attention.

Our faith was dealt the severest blow, however, by the theory of evolution. For years I battled with the problems arising from this modern theory until I finally came to the conclusion that if man in the course of millions of years had developed from a simple living cell, the difference between man and animal could be one only of gradation. Forthwith the existence of a soul could not be admitted. The treatise of Dennert-Godesberg, *Vom Sterbelager des Darwinismus*, afforded me little in the way of conclusive arguments, since Dennert's attack was merely directed against the principle of mechanistic selection, not against the theory of evolution as such.

An even far more dangerous implication was contained in the assumption that the development of man and humanity in its struggle for existence would just as automatically lead to undreamed progress as had been the development of higher from lower forms of life in the past. A total misconception of the word *progress* on the part of modern paganism, explains why man fails to recognize his own purpose and the necessity of redemption.

I must frankly admit that a false notion of progress misled me as well as others in the course of our studies. Most probably I would have succumbed to the noxious influences to which I was subject during the years preparatory to the medical profession, if I had not found compensation and relaxation in a new youth movement.

The *Wandervogel* youth movement, as it is called, which I joined with enthusiasm, had its beginning at the high school of Steglitz. From the congested classrooms we wandered into the open country, free from all bonds of conventionalism. We felt closer to the man on the

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street, to the peasants in the villages, but also closer to the traditions of our country in the contemplation of historic and architectural monuments as well as in the revival of old folklore.

It would be wrong to assume that the *Wandervogel* movement was possessed of a fixed philosophy of life or even a religion. On a hiking trip through Catholic Germany, a member of our young group, a radical follower of Haeckel, once made a remark to the effect that the populace was badly in need of scientific enlightenment. My close friend, our leader Hans Breuer, who was later killed in action before Verdun, responded vehemently: "We shall do nothing of the kind! Have we a better substitute to offer?" This reverential attitude toward the traditional religion of the people was, I may say, a characteristic quality of our leader, Hans Breuer.

Through the *Wandervogel*, I received my first favorable impression of Catholicism. Since I made my studies for the greater part in southern Germany, I frequently had occasion to witness how closely people, nature, and Church were interwoven. A procession in the open, with waving banners, amid the green fields of the Bavarian plateau, a friendly Monsignor and country pastor, a visit to the churches in May during a breathing spell in my study of medicine, all these things were like a friendly greeting from the Church to a stranger. Still the result was merely a more friendly and less hostile attitude toward the Church, for new ideas had caused me to drift far away from Christianity. Whenever some younger members of the *Wandervogel* group inquired whether Hans Breuer or I were Catholic or Protestant, we were wont to answer tersely: "We are students of medicine," which was meant to imply: *The natural sciences preclude any religious or Church affiliations.*

Still, whenever I contemplated the world as a physico-chemical conglomeration in which no light, no color, no

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sound existed other than whirling atoms; and when I realized the discrepancy between a postulated infinite astronomical space and our ability to imagine space only as limited, I was tempted to say with Plato: "We live as if in a cave into which mysterious shadows fall."

Into this darkness, when troubles began to beset me, there finally shone, like a star which guides the traveler, a belief in man's eternal destiny. But this light was not yet of great effulgence. It merely pointed out the direction. But to the right and left of the road, all remained shrouded in darkness. Neither was the light close enough to quicken my spirits. It was like the rays of the stars which led us gropingly and instinctively to the desired goal.

I had served as an intern for two years in a Berlin hospital and had been married a year and a half when the great war broke out. The experience of the World War, which undermined and shattered the faith in countless soldiers, prepared and effected a revival of my own Christian Faith.

The face and bearing of a young French priest, standing before his house in the Meuse-Department through which we marched, impressed me greatly. His face, as it were, radiated a spiritual beauty of its own. A few weeks later, after the battle of the Marne, when I was ordered to stay with 200 wounded German soldiers, I made acquaintance among the French Red Cross units with many a *prêtre sac au dos* and I recall with great satisfaction the skill of one in administering ether prior to big operations.

A doctor from Alsace-Lorraine served as my adviser and interpreter. This doctor rendered me every possible assistance. He was the first educated Catholic I met and proudly professed his Faith. Having studied with the Jesuits, he was much interested in astronomy, and one evening when we were trying to espy the rings of Saturn from a vantage point before the barracks, he told me

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that he had respected and loved, and still respected all his former teachers. This greatly astonished me. Another time he firmly maintained that all social problems and international conflicts would find a peaceful solution if the world would become Christian. I did not dare to challenge this statement. I am certain that my friend in the medical profession included me in his prayers during early Mass in the prison camp.

Christmas, 1914, I was exchanged via Switzerland for a French doctor, and after a short furlough with my wife and child I soon was back in the *Champagne pouilleuse*.

During the terrible barrage of the Champagne battle, in the fall of 1915, the thought occurred to me that a stronger and clearer faith would enhance and beautify natural courage. After this battle came more quiet days. Sitting at the window of my small chamber, I would often ponder over the meaning of life. My soul was like a field which had been turned over by the upheaval of the war and was ready for good seed.

The sower who cast the first abundance of seeds into my furrowed soul was the philosopher Max Scheler. The first book of his which came into my hand was *Der Genius des Kriegeres*. I read the book twice with enthusiasm, since I failed to digest its contents at the first reading. Then I procured a collection of his lectures edited under the title: *Vom Umsturz der Werte*. For weeks it was impossible for me to read a newspaper because everything seemed so insipid compared with Scheler's writings. I realized that I would have to reverse my outlook on life if I intended to follow Scheler, but I was not loath to attempt such a transformation.

Years ago I had viewed with admiration a painting by Hans Memling, *Ritter und Priester*, on which the standing knight had almost a priestly resemblance and the kneeling priest almost the features of a knight. In a similar way Scheler depicted in lofty language the ideal of a

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Christian soldier and knight. The paradoxical saying of Christ, "Love your enemies," was not to be understood in the sense: peace at any price. The indomitable General Tilly, who prayed for his enemies before battle, was mentioned as the exemplification of a Christian soldier.

Scheler also taught me that dogmas were not given to Christians to be subjected to a critical analysis of the intellect until they collapse like a house hollowed out by termites, but were rather to be considered as revealed mysteries in which God permits us to participate and enrich our lives in contemplating them. Thus for instance, the dogma of the resurrection of the flesh, which causes unwarranted speculations does honor to our mortal bodies and constitutes, as it were, an anticipation of its impending transfiguration.

The treatise of Scheler, concerned with the ideal of love in Paganism and Christianity, was an astounding proof for the needed revaluation of what had taken place with the advent of Christianity. Likewise, the new scale of values ranging over such varied topics as the useful, vital, noble, beautiful, truthful, and holy, and their corresponding human types such as manual laborer, knight, philosopher, and saint, greatly interested me. Man could no longer be considered merely a part of *materia*. He belonged to the spiritual realm. His primary and ultimate purpose was to praise and serve his Maker. Just as a flower which does not bloom, a nightingale which does not sing, has each missed the purpose of its existence, so also man has failed in life if he does not communicate with God. *Homo non est homo nisi orans* — "man is not a man unless he prays."

The relation existing between body and soul is elucidated by an apt comparison. The human body is likened to an instrument, a keyboard of the spirit, if you wish. The soul is the player; the thoughts, words, and actions are the melody. The keyboard is comparable to the nerve

center; the connecting device, to the nerves; the motor, to the heart.

Scientific research, which I had considered with Visschers as a sort of religious occupation, was relegated to a far lower level as a result of imbibing this new theory on the "revaluation of values." Natural sciences, as a matter of fact, do not occupy themselves with the essence of things. They rather intend to achieve control of the powers of nature, making them serviceable to humanity. Though natural sciences employ logical deductions, they, after all, only carry out the divine command: Rule over the world and make it subject to yourself.

The communication of Christian ideology through Scheler brought me in happy contact again with the age-old traditions of my people. It was, therefore, but natural that I decided to go back to where I had broken with the faith of my youth. Protestant writings which came into my possession at that time were rather trite and insignificant. A treatise of the celebrated Professor Hermann of Marburg, argued that the Turks, our allies, were spiritually more closely related to us in consequence of their adoption of Kant's Imperative than the Christian nations with whom we waged war.

A footnote in the writing of Scheler acquainted me with Möhler's *Symbolik*. How fortunate it was for me that my medical profession entitled me to a private dug-out at the front and to own quarters in back of the lines. In this way I had ample opportunity to delve into the writings of Möhler, Scheler, and Kant.

After studying Möhler, I saw with the eyes of the Church that all negations and distortions, as well as the shocking denials of liberal Protestantism, were in some way to be found already in the Arians, Manicheans, and other early sects. The positive definition which Möhler gave of the Catholic conception of the Church captivated my mind. I had crossed the Rubicon and henceforth the

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rock of Peter was the goal toward which my ship of life remained headed.

Was there anything which could now deter me from my course? If through the centuries one might find among the laity and clergy evildoers and traitors to the cause of Christ, who had died impenitent, they had gone down to hell. Had not Christ Himself tolerated Judas among the select group of His Apostles? Should the office of judge be abrogated because unworthy members had sat on the bench? Should the successors of Peter no longer tend the flock because a few hirelings were to be found among them? The first thirty popes were martyrs, and gave their lives for the sheep. And how many worthy, great, and holy men adorned the Papacy in later years?

Whenever circumstances permitted, I now attended Catholic services. Occasionally I listened to a French sermon and heard some time later a sermon of a Catholic priest of the Ruthenian rite in Galicia. Books which I picked up in rectories, in deserted villages during the offensives in 1917 and 1918, were of still greater benefit to me. In Galicia I acquired in this manner a good book written in German and dealing with the Rosary, though this form of prayer is unknown to the Greek Uniates of the Ukraine.

All valuable writings of Scheler I had dispatched to my wife after reading the same, and during my short furloughs we had jointly laid a new foundation of Christian endeavor. Later on, a stay of six weeks in the hospital of my home town afforded us ample opportunity of discussing Möhler together. We deemed it most urgent to find a common foundation of life on which we might stand and also place our three children, with whom God had already blessed us. Scheler as well as Möhler had by their gifted minds let the beauty of the Church illumine the dark paths which we trod.

The forced marches during the retreat from France

in Advent, 1918, and the plight of the Fatherland, awakened religious sentiments also in many officers of our company. Whenever we took quarters for the night on a bed of straw provided by the farmers of the Eifel, conversation usually turned to religion.

Among the immediate friends of our family, Christian Science had in the meantime gained entrance, and at my homecoming I was handed a bulky volume of *Mother Mary* with the injunction to study it carefully. The perusal of a few pages of this pathological religion, full of Manichean errors, made me close the book in disgust.

At last, on the Feast of Epiphany, 1919, two "pagans" made their way to a small Catholic rectory and asked a young priest — not to be received into the Church, for we were not as yet well enough prepared — for guidance on the new road we now intended to travel. Though the priest seemed somewhat reluctant in the beginning, he waxed warm in his instructions when he became aware of our good will.

The seer Anna Catherine Emmerick of Westphalia saw in a vision the heathens entering St. Peter's in Rome through the doors, while the Protestants who embraced the Catholic Faith entered through the walls. This vision is explained as follows: Luther and others who broke with the Church have taken stones out of the Church and erected churches of their own, in which their followers were confined and excluded from the great community of the faithful. It is easier to convert heathens than Protestants. The heathens go readily and in great numbers through the open door, but those who have been detained, as it were, by the spell of heresy in separate dwellings, have great difficulty in getting out. Thus our priestly guide had quite a task to perform with hammer and chisel until he laid down the wall surrounding us. But even then, oh! how stiff were our Protestant necks and knees!

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When God has enriched man with His grace in order that he may recognize the divine truths; when the human intellect is convinced that the teachings of the Church rest on the words of Christ and have logically and organically developed, that many things surpass all human comprehension because they are divine, it but remains for the will likewise to acknowledge the truth and follow it. After six months of instruction we decided to tarry no longer, and we were privileged to recite joyfully the magnificent Nicene Creed in our Cathedral Church before our Reverend instructor.

For seventeen years we have now been enjoying the blessing of being members of the all-embracing Church. Would to God that all our brethren might find the way from banishment into the Church!

Goethe makes Faust utter the longing cry: "Where shall I find you, fountain of life? — you gurgle and refresh and I languish here in vain." Our Lord gives the answer: "He that shall drink of the water that I will give him, shall not thirst forever" (John 4:13).

CONQUERED BY CHARITY

HANS CARL WENDLANDT

NEXT to the grace of God and the intercession of the Blessed Mother, the mediatrix of all graces, I attribute my conversion to the recognition that Truth and Love have found their highest expression in the Catholic religion.

I was born in 1898 in Sanssouci, near Potsdam, the youngest child of Friedrich Wendlandt, who from 1891 till 1918 held the position as chaplain in ordinary at the court of the last Prussian king. The Church of Peace, at which my father officiated, had been built in the style of the early Christian churches by Friedrich Wilhelm IV. The ideal location of our home in a setting of natural beauty and enhanced by works of art, such as the basilica and cross galleries, created a unique atmosphere of refinement and spirituality which made a deep and lasting impression on me. My parents, whose ambition it was carefully and lovingly to supervise my education and to gladden childhood days, enjoyed the love and esteem of their fellow men. My pious father, who faithfully defended the belief in the divinity of Christ and dauntlessly attacked Liberalism, remained loyal to the king in spite of many a slight. My mother, a perfect guardian of domestic affairs and spiritually inclined, was at the same time interested in world problems and possessed of great prudence.

Our home, which always was open to relatives and friends, was frequently honored by quite distinguished

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guests, such as Dr. von Bergmann, Bethman von Hollweg, who later became Chancellor of Germany, and other influential men. I likewise gratefully remember the years spent at the Royal Victoria High School in Potsdam, from which I graduated in 1917 with the intention of devoting myself to the study of Catholic religious orders. Already as a high-school student I felt an ever increasing interest in the great Catholic orders of the Middle Ages and later on became equally interested in the more recently founded religious congregations of the Catholic Church. My parents were in no way opposed to my work and I myself was attracted to it more and more by the heterogeneous Catholic orders of which my Protestant friends were either ignorant or misinformed. I consulted standard Catholic works and learned of the development of many religious foundations of the past, of their vast influence in the field of science. I began to understand the essence of religious life and that of the Catholic Church, which remains an enigma to so many outsiders.

With increasing knowledge on my part, Protestantism was refuted in my mind, at least insofar as it rejected the authority of the Church and the evangelical counsels. Personally, however, the Protestant belief in the existence of an "invisible and spiritual church" as a supplement to the visible, Roman Catholic Church, still seemed plausible to me. My father, who had been a decided opponent of the prevalent Luther cult and of the *Evangelischer Bund*, a violently anti-Catholic organization, and only lived long enough to witness the beginning of my Catholic tendencies, died in 1918 in the midst of his self-sacrificing labors. *Requiescat in pace!*

During the years of my attendance at the University of Berlin, from 1919 to 1922, the greatest Protestant theologian since Leibnitz, Adolf von Harnack, showed keen interest in my studies, while the first chaplain in ordinary, Ernst von Dryander, gave me every possible

assistance. The latter once remarked: "I gladly give you my support. However, I can only do so as long as you do not turn Catholic."

Adolf von Harnack advised me to submit a comprehensive treatise on the religious orders and congregations of women in Prussia to the Protestant theological faculty as the required dissertation for obtaining a degree. This I did, but when Harnack retired on account of old age, the faculty refused to accept the dissertation, though it passed upon it as a "product of unusual application." Thereupon I left the university and managed to acquire enough money as a private tutor to publish the manuscript, which came off the press in 1924, but not without subsidy of the Holy Father in Rome.

After quitting the university I devoted myself exclusively to my historical studies. Thanks to the assistance of many religious communities in Germany and Holland, and due to my repeated stay in various cloisters, I was able to acquaint myself personally with the work of the religious. I had never believed the current prattle about monasteries and convents. Nevertheless, when I became a witness to the reality of the religious spirit which radiates from the most secluded cloister, when the hitherto faint ideals of adoration, penance, evangelic poverty and charity became a living reality, the "invisible and spiritual church" of Protestantism seemed like a hollow phrase to me.

Still years of great inner struggle followed. While my mother and friends already counted on my impending conversion, I myself was held back by the thought that my calling was not clear enough to warrant such a decisive step. I was convinced that my knowledge was more intellectual than supernatural. Consequently I prayed for enlightenment and also asked others to pray for me.

Thus the fear of acting rashly led me to resist for ten years the grace of God which had illumined my intellect

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to a better understanding. At last, in spring of the year 1927, the decision came. In the beginning of May I had attempted to explain in a letter to a Catholic friend, who was much troubled by doubts in faith, the beauty and depth of the invocations of the Litany of Loretto. In doing so I realized fully for the first time that I was already a Catholic at heart. A few days later, when visiting in Magdeburg, I felt as if some mysterious power placed me before the alternative of either becoming a Catholic or losing my soul for eternity. As soon, however, as I decided to embrace the Faith, a feeling of rapturous joy surged through me. I felt as if the whole world had been given me, as if I had awakened to a new life. What I had seen manifest in saintly people, in heavenly minded religious — a burning love of God — revealed itself in my innermost soul: "For the Father Himself loveth you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God" (John 16:27).

On the eve of the Feast of Corpus Christi, 1927, I was received into the Catholic Church in the chapel of St. Joseph Hospital in Potsdam. In the study of the religious life of the Church I found Truth and Love, the invincible powers of the kingship of Christ, the seal of His disciples.

DEFLATING PANTHEISM

DR. ROBERT BRAUN

THE oft-employed phrase, "roads to the Church," in connection with a conversion is really most appropriate, and in my case it was a long and arduous journey. At the beginning of my road of life stood Judaism, in which I was born and reared, and which led me to the Synagogue every Sabbath. However, I did not feel at home at this place of worship. I did not grasp the meaning of the ceremonies and, moreover, the conduct of my companions was so scandalous, their remarks about the services and teachers so frivolous, that I often envied my Christian friends who had at least the advantage of worshipping in a truly religious atmosphere.

Our home afforded no religious inspiration whatever. My father was a confirmed liberal who had no use for his own or other religions. In fact, all religions were but business enterprises to him, and he maintained that the ultimate purpose of life was to be a "gentleman of principles." But even though my father lived up to his maxims in a remarkable degree, such as I perhaps shall never achieve in mine — his life was spent in work and sacrifice for his large family — I on my part remained dissatisfied in my craving for something higher than my own self.

Since I could not dedicate my life to art, as had an older brother who poured out his whole life into poetry, there remained for me only the veneration or cult of Nature. This revealed itself to me — confined to the limits of a metropolis — in the blossoming wild ash and

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linden trees which dotted the famous Ringstrasse of Vienna. The sturdy stems of these trees, the swaying boughs, the tender foliage in springtime, the colorful transmutation of the leaves in autumn — all this bespoke a stupendous vitality outside of me, a spring of life, from which not only the trees but all creatures derived their origin. It was this thought which gave me the blissful assurance that nothing untoward could happen to me, that I also could unfold myself joyfully according to my innate potentialities. I was a pantheist, and intimacy with nature and joy in it was my religion.

Of course, I soon became acquainted with the reverse side of my Nature cult. If I arrogated to myself the right to develop as freely as a tree, which shoots forth its branches and leaves, I was headed for an egotistic self-complacency which would make me inconsiderate of others. The bitter experience of my first friendship taught me how this pagan product struck back at me like a boomerang. I had, even though unconsciously, attempted to make my friend subservient to me, but was soon to realize that he had a soul of his own which asserted its freedom in resisting such an attempt, and so on sane grounds effected a dissolution of the world in which I lived. Thus I came to grief, but at least I had discovered that no spiritual security could be found in the contemplation of the trees and birds, of the flowers and the elements.

In the meantime I had become an adherent of theosophy, in which I found a continuation of my cult of Nature. The theosophists also spoke of "the workshop of Nature," "the animal soul," and the like, all of which irritated my self-complacency. What, indeed, was meant by the teaching of the "masters," who were supposed to lead historic movements, if every individual carried within his bosom the laws of his own development, which patterned him just as an oak leaf is patterned by its in-

born qualities? This was tantamount to an acknowledgment of faith on authority, which I decried. The veneration of a higher person was quite foreign to me and finally caused me to sever my membership in the cult of the theosophists.

It was wholly in accordance with this period of my development that Jesus Christ also should have remained a stranger to me. I refused to acknowledge Him as God. At the most He seemed to be a religious genius, just as Napoleon was a military genius. Likewise I viewed the Catholic Church only as a freethinker would, with the eyes of Stirner and Nietzsche.

However, we undoubtedly live under the care of our angels who strive to correct our mental aberrations, and so it came about that the perusal of the books of Jakob Böhme, to which theosophy referred me, became the turning point of my life. A rising distrust of theosophy, which I suspected to be a mixture of European and Indian ideas, made me hope to find the original sources of Böhme's writings. But here, in fact, I found the great idea which was to dominate my reasoning throughout the ensuing years, and which made me increasingly desirous of joining a Christian church without deciding on any particular one.

In consequence of the mystical conception of Christianity contained in the writings of Böhme, I became disengaged from the more or less rational inquiry whether Christ was merely a "genius," "a great man," a "typical Jew" or a "supernatural being." For in these writings He did not figure as a historical, but as a divine person, as the redeemer of Nature, as the abrogator of the guilt of Adam, as a prototype of holiness who stood above humanity. And so I finally realized that every self-complacency in presence of such exalted dignity was sheer folly and that it was best to become and feel again as a child and a creature.

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While meditating on trees in the past, I had only seen the unfolding of life from the invisible depths of Nature. But now the thought arose in me that it behooved a deity to sacrifice himself in order that Nature might live and life unfold itself. Thus the father must sacrifice himself in order that the children may thrive. A gifted man dedicates his life to humanity by a discovery which will benefit mankind, and he becomes greater in proportion to his unselfish devotion to his cause. After all, each one of us sustains his life through the necessary nourishment, but the food of which we partake is doomed to lend its existence to ours. Consequently, a mysterious relation exists between sacrifice and life.

What then would be more natural than that a God, the Supreme Being, should offer Himself, sacrifice Himself for all? God was not a tyrant, an appellation with which I had often branded the Saviour; but His power, yea, His omnipotence consisted, in my estimation, in His infinite goodness which urged Him to make Himself a victim for all. Only in this manner the visible Nature could continue to exist.¹ Long before I had found the door to the Church, long before I became acquainted with the meaning of Mass, this sacrifice in which we all wondrously participate, I felt that no greater lifegiving source could exist, than the mystery of the Last Supper.

I had long discontinued my affiliations with the Jewish religion since a church membership seemed incompatible with my religious conception. Still I felt that this neutral position, this detachment from definite religious groups, was unsatisfactory. All the while I was a so-called "liberal Christian" who held Christ in highest esteem and regularly read the New Testament, but this brought about no change of life. Like a poor student I lagged behind in all things because I had flunked in the main school. Since

¹ NOTE: These are the thoughts which led Mr. Braun to the faith. They are not a theological interpretation of God's attributes.

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I had married and had one child, I grew even more disconcerted. I was pressed to look for a unifying power to which my beloved ones and I could subject our minds and hearts and find ourselves in Him. It is true that I had already a vague feeling that this could be found only within the Catholic Church, for I had often attended Mass as an unbeliever, but I could not as yet relieve myself of my deeply rooted suspicions.

One day — it was at the time of the first Jewish persecutions in Germany — I read an article by Father Cyril Fischer, O.F.M., which dealt lucidly with the mission of the Jewish people. The expositions of this eminent Franciscan were not only a solace in our painful humiliations, but likewise a corroboration of my own conclusions on this subject. I felt as if a friend had written to me and wrote a letter of appreciation to the unknown author. Soon I received a friendly response, and with it an invitation for a discussion at the Franciscan monastery in Vienna. Here my last doubts were dispelled and at length I found the bridge to a new life, which I had sought so long. My conversion, which had been such a wearisome process, was now like a ripe fruit which fell into my lap. I arranged for instructions in the Catholic religion at once and was baptized the same year.

I must add here that I lived on the outskirts of Vienna at this time where my Jewish ancestry was well known. In the beginning, therefore, my attendance at Catholic services was quite embarrassing, since the faithful eyed me with an air of suspicion. Their glances seemed to indicate that they distrusted me and considered my conversion a clever maneuver to curry their favor for personal gain.

For this reason I frequently attended Mass in one of the big parishes in the city where my presence did not attract the attention of the other worshippers. After a while, however, I considered this as cowardice and resolutely

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frequented the services in my home parish. As a rule I stood in a corner of our beautiful Gothic church, trying to feel that the motley group of faithful were all brethren in Christ. I cannot say how happy I was when I merged with this devotional assembly, when I knelt with the crowd to receive the benediction with the Blessed Sacrament and joined in the beautiful hymns of St. Thomas Aquinas in praise of the Eucharistic King! Especially when my wife and daughter accompanied me to church and my little daughter knelt at my side and sang with me, my joy knew no bounds.

How I first began to understand the deeper significance of the Mass and the liturgical year, which centered about Christ who gives Himself to all under the species of bread and wine is the story of my rich inheritance in the Church. As time passed, I discovered more and more the hidden treasures of my Faith which is such an inestimable blessing for our miserable existence that there remains really nothing else to do than to thank God unceasingly for this great gift.

CORRECT BIBLE READING

EMMA DESSEWFFY

MY PARENTS were pious and self-sacrificing people. My father, Denis Dessewffy of Cserenek and Taokö, was one of the most famed heroes of the Hungarian War of Liberation (1848-49). His opponents even hanged him in effigy, but with God's grace he succeeded in making his escape to Switzerland, where he later married my mother, Adele Jourdan. The ancestors of my mother were likewise emigrants, coming from an ancient family of Huguenots.

I was born in the year 1858 in Geneva. A few years later, in 1863, general amnesty was declared, and my father returned to Hungary with his family. At the age of 14 I was sent back to Switzerland to be tutored by my grandmother, a very cultured woman of deep piety. She it was who gave me a new outlook on life by interesting me in social work, to which I had always taken a great fancy. During this time I studied the holy Gospels diligently and attempted to follow their injunctions. In order to broaden my knowledge, I likewise read many books dealing with other religions. However, due to an ingrained prejudice, I was not interested in the Catholic Church. This Church, I was told, so full of superstition and idolatry, was the work of man. Three times I had a chance to convince myself of the contrary, but each time I haughtily resisted God's grace.

As all people on earth, I was also subject to many trials and temptations. During this time my dearly beloved

Correct Bible Reading

mother died. I remained in Geneva until I became of age and first returned to Hungary when my brother lost his wife, and when in consequence his small children sorely needed attention and care. Thus I was privileged to give them all maternal care though I never became married myself. I devoted myself wholeheartedly to my new calling, and after the children grew up I also tried to do social work in the community. Social problems engaged my attention very much, and it was upon my initiative that the patronages for the abolishment of prostitution and other valuable organizations came into existence.

Since my brother had not remarried, we lived together until his death, and until my sixty-fourth year I was most happy in the fulfillment of my God-given mission. Then, suddenly, everything within and around me seemed to collapse: the Communistic insurrection, the death of my brother and of my best friends, among whom I deplored the loss of Count and Countess Tisza — all brought such mental and physical strain that I was forced to withdraw wholly from my former occupation.

In this spiritual crisis and abandonment I grew helpless, until after long hours of meditation I once more derived hope and consolation from the Bible. There my faltering soul found the answer to its problems and my spirits were again soothed. This time the perusal of the Sacred Scriptures, however, familiarized me quite startlingly with the origin of certain Catholic teachings and practices based on the words of Christ and the Apostles. The clear references in the Epistle of St. James to the necessity of good works, of Confession, and Extreme Unction — all of which have been relegated by Protestantism — did not escape my attention. Likewise, the appointment of St. Peter as supreme shepherd in the Gospel of St. Matthew supported the claims of the Papacy.

A renewed struggle began in my soul at this new discovery. In this dilemma two friends came to my assistance

It Didn't Rime

Besides this, the Christianity I met with was invariably colored by subjectivity and accentuated by emotion. It was mostly kind, such as that of the elderly ladies who went in for Christianity. I assumed that they required it as a sort of personal comfort. In any case, it did not interest me, nor did I see any particular interest in it on the part of my own companions. As is usual and fitting, I was confirmed. I could not be different from the rest. Besides, confirmation would bring with it a number of nice presents. But the instruction for confirmation passed right over me. I do not mean by this to blame the minister who instructed me. I simply cannot remember what he said or did not say. I remember him only as a very friendly, well-cared-for and musically gifted man. But that Christ should be a reality and a truth in our life, in my own individual life today and every day, that, above all, never occurred to me then. All was good and fine, but entirely a matter of sentiment.

Nor was it religious interest that first brought me in contact with the Catholic Church. What happened was only one of the many incidents which I have since learned to know as constituting the Lord's providence. Neither was it any "Catholic propaganda" which decided the matter. It was occasioned, strange as that may sound, by the newspaper *Dagbladet* and by Dr. Kr. Schjelderup.

In the autumn of 1924, while still a postwar prosperity and so-called "good times" reigned in our country, and the materialistic viewpoint of life spread as never before, there was published a typical product of the time, first as a series of articles and later in book form. The volume was entitled: "Who Was Christ and What Did the Church Make of Him?" The author was Dr. Kr. Schjelderup.

These articles were extremely engrossing. I always took great interest in history, and for that reason I read them with close attention. Furthermore, I now became inter-

Pastor Haakon Bergwitz

but it also has close connection with my work as a priest.

Recently a person who had been closely connected with the Lutheran congregation of our town was received into the Church. On that occasion one of his acquaintances, who had been present at the ceremony, remarked: "How could you make such a profession of faith? You bind yourself hand and foot by it and can never again find yourself free. We Lutheran Christians have real freedom to believe what we will . . ."

This remark also requires an answer, an explanation of why Lutheran Christians sometimes accept the Catholic belief and willingly give their promise to be faithful to it as long as life lasts and God gives them the grace.

To begin with, I shall call to mind some passages from Holy Scripture. In the Gospel of St. John, chapter eighteen, we read the words of Jesus Christ as He stands before Pilate:

"For this was I born, and for this came I into the World; that I should give testimony to the truth. Everyone that is of the truth, heareth My voice."

Then Pilate, the worldly wise, self-conscious, egotistical skeptic, turns toward Him and says:

"What is the truth?" What do we know of the truth? I do not believe in You.

But for Christ, the truth has meaning.

"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life" are His words in chapter fourteen of the same gospel. Then again He says: "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

As a child I did not grow up in a religious atmosphere. In spite of the fact that upon my mother's side I belong to an old Lutheran clerical family and can point to a number of more or less prominent clerics in my family, yet my home never was a religious one. It was rather the opposite — much the same as most of the west-side homes were at that time.

IT DIDN'T RIME

PASTOR HAAKON BERGWITZ

TWO recent incidents are the reason for my giving this short account of why I became a Catholic, and why I am today as convinced a Catholic as when I took the step and entered the ancient Catholic Church, more than ten years ago.

The first incident directly concerns myself.

All of my family and the majority of my friends and acquaintances were and are Protestants. For not a few of them — at least this is my impression — it has been something of a problem that I should venture to go over to the Catholic Church. A greater problem, perhaps, than my change of faith, has been my choice of the priesthood in that Church. My position has been respected, but to them it is incomprehensible that anyone in our modern age could turn back to what, according to them, is such a thing of the past as Catholic Christianity. Some ask: "Can he be wholly honest and sincere in this religion, or must he not for the most part, as a measure of obedience, bow to the Catholic control of intelligence, and so proclaim and preach things which, were he on free foot and not in the position he holds under the powerful authority of the Church, he would not proclaim and preach?"

I know this theory has been set forth recently by one whom I esteem. To give an answer to this person and to all others who may share his opinion of converts, is the principal reason for this account.

The second incident does not concern myself directly,

their conscience? When I have so little trust in the conscience of other people to keep their conversation always clean, shall I presume to believe that my own conscience does not require guidance from without?

Because I believe that Jesus Christ is God Himself, my Maker, I therefore believe also that He has built His Church as man needs it. What God has given me through His Church is difficult to put into words. His very lips have told us that He bestows on us His peace, but His peace is not that which the world gives. It is a different peace. It may, perhaps, be likened to the peace that reigns far down in the depths of the great sea. Good weather or bad across its surface cannot affect it, nor the struggle of strange monsters in its depths that devour each other. Our practical experience is that God's Kingdom is within us, although we find ourselves encircled by our own uneasy self, half concerned with realities, half with the world's illusions. But we experience that in a supernatural manner God is in us and unceasingly upholds His Kingdom within us against our own assaults upon it.

Beyond Human Limitations

a matter of course. If we believe that God has saved us by taking upon Himself our flesh and blood, then surely we must look upon Mary, she in whose womb He formed His body, with feelings unlike those we have for any other purely human being—feelings of a profound respect, a deep devotion, a true sympathy with the unspeakable trials of her life on earth, and joy in her incomprehensible rank in the Kingdom of God. For if it be true that Mary's Son is both true God and true man, then is the Son her son, and the Mother His mother, for all eternity, yet He is the Creator and she His creature. That the word *worship* means two different things when we talk of worshiping our Creator and of worshiping the woman who was made by Him in beauty as a flower of His created earth, no Catholic fails to understand.

Restraint of conscience or liberty of conscience? But the very people who praised liberty of conscience the highest were the ones, I thought, who could have benefited exceedingly if their consciences had been guided by a strong hand. As for instance, when they took liberties with the good name and reputation of their neighbor, something which even in my most pagan days, my conscience would never have allowed to me. I did not know whether this was due to my conscience alone or to my conscience as my parents had developed it. They were accustomed to say that one person knows so little about another, that the only thing we can safely say on hearing a story about another is that it probably is not true. People who indulge in gossip must always be a trifle feeble-minded, and when they spread slander it is only an outlet for the filth which often afflicts the weak-minded. But I never have cared to assert that they acted against better knowledge or against their conscience. On the whole, what has man not done to man? And what right have I to assume that others acted against

The usual objections against Catholicism which I had heard in the past failed to make any great impression on me. Naturally, however, I had received a rather vague idea that there must be some truth in these censures in view of the widespread prevalence of the stories. Besides, there are in particular two facts that induce men to believe them. The first is our disinclination to give up our own favorite fancies of which we fear a teaching Church will deprive us. The other is the scandal caused by bad Catholics in every age. This last is the dark reverse side of the luminous doctrine of the Communion of Saints.

I think it should be easier for people of our day to understand what is meant by the doctrine of the merits of the saints, which implies a treasury of riches from which the whole Church may benefit, for in our own time not only Catholics but Christians of all sects and shades suffer for the guilt of each single one of us before God and his neighbor. No human unity is as absolute as the unity between the living cells in the Mystical Body of Christ.

The homage paid to the saints, fostered by the Church from the beginning, really seems to answer an ineradicable need of our nature. We must worship heroes! In lieu of better, we have made heroes of match kings and gangsters, sportsmen and artists, film stars and dictators. We must set someone on a pedestal so that we may admire something of ourselves in him. In the saints is realized the object God had in creating us—to quote the words of the Offertory: “who didst wonderfully create and dignify the human race, and hast still more wonderfully reformed it.” Only in the saints can we find an outlet for our hero worship, without at the same time worshiping something of our own nature which it is cowardly or degrading to worship.

The cult of Mary? I always have looked upon this as

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unwilling fear was to be our destiny, but a life in and with God, the Eternal Blessedness which we are not able to conceive. But even in living our life here on earth we can experience so close a contact with the divine that we know life can be happy, even though eternal, since in God we can unceasingly renew our life's strength from that power to which is due all life in the world.

At last I had progressed to the point of seeing that I had no belief in God at all. But I believed still less in my own unbelief. The signs which force us against our will to accept Christianity as one accepts, for instance, a demonstration of relationship in botany (even if here the "scientifically proved" facts are not nearly as many as the teachers in school believed), were out of question. Otherwise how could Christ say: "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be condemned"? This certainly does not preclude a man from using his reason, but in the last instance it is his will which chooses. It is for him to decide whether he will isolate himself in the hell of his own egotism, or give himself wholly to God and be freed of the limitations of self-love to go on to eternal possibilities.

There was nothing else for me to do than to go to a priest and ask to be instructed in all that the Catholic Church really teaches. That the Catholic Church was identical with the Church founded by Christ I had never doubted. For me the question of the Church's authority was entirely a question of Christ's authority. I never had understood the history of the Reformation as other than a history of rebellion against Christianity, even though it was a rebellion of believing Christians — often subjectively pious — who hoped that true Christianity was something which harmonized better with their subjective Christian ideals than the actuality, such as the impression of its phenomena must be in a world where the good fare ill in unholy human hands.

although I could not possibly say that I believed in man's perfectibility. I simply believed in man's stupidity and intelligence, in his goodness and wickedness, his courage and weakness, and in the unstable nature of the individual. Among those whom I had met, I trusted some few rather than the many. Nevertheless, I felt that if it was true, as a Salvation Army lassie remarked in my childhood home, that God loves sinners — "The greater sinner a person is, the more God loves him" — so, too, from a human point of view, must He love best those perfect men who always stand in danger of sinning, in their minds or in their thoughts, and that in a worse way than the ordinary run of rogues and harlots could dream of.

The thought that all human powers and gifts which fit an individual to be a teacher, a leader, and pioneer in the world, must make him a conscious or unconscious wrongdoer against his followers unless he knows himself bound by a personal responsibility to someone who stands over all men and who, as it were, holds humanity in His hand — this it was that explained Christianity to me in a way that at any rate had consistency, probability, and reasonableness about it beyond any other attempt at solving the riddle of life. Humanity's fellowship consists in our being all coheirs in a bankrupt estate after the fall of man. A common loss of the ability on which we might rely to overcome the vanishing point of our virtues and our knowledge, I argued, makes it impossible for any man to lead his fellow men on other than a wrong track. Only a supernatural intervention can save us from ourselves. The Christian Church teaches that Christ was Himself this intervention. God, who by permitting Himself to be born of a woman, had united Himself with our nature, and by allowing Himself to be crucified to redeem us from sin, had prepared the way to an eternal life for us. Not the existence in Hell or Hades which man always has looked forward to with

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that most of the freethinkers of my acquaintance actually desired a God who would let them propose while He disposed. Quite the contrary, most of them suffered from Theophobia! I knew that was very often my own case. So, too, I knew that people believed in a life after death, but seldom as a pleasant form of existence — their thoughts were of Hell or Hades. They had accepted belief in this as an inescapable fact. I myself could not imagine any form of eternal life which would not be appalling in length. All the things of this world, in the final analysis, draw their charm from the knowledge that we shall not enjoy them very long. The miracle of the seasons pierces us to the very marrow of our bones because we know that sooner or later will come a spring we shall not see, a year when the first snow will fall on a mound under which we lie. And even those we love best — would it be possible to love them so much were it not for the certainty that death will take us from them if life has not already done so?

It was the old story — I had rejected the beliefs and unbeliefs of others because they were ridiculously full of their own idiosyncrasies, but I now realized that my own point of view displayed the same weakness. Surely, I could continue to believe in "my own power and strength," knowing well how little I had to depend on. Others, in the days of old, had managed to go through life with an equally scant belief, but they made no claim that it was for them anything more than a blade with which they could hew their way through a brief existence here. At all events, they had not been sentimental about it, nor had they grown eloquent about any brotherhood in play or love of conflict.

For my part, I could not rid myself of a feeling that one who isolates himself thus is a traitor, though I could not see precisely what the treachery was nor to whom I was a traitor. I believed in a brotherhood among men,

others into something good. That was the Christ whom St. Olav preached to the men who came and offered to believe in the King's own captivating personality. "If you have faith in me, you shall have faith in what I teach you, you shall believe that Jesus Christ has created the heavens and the earth and all men."

Nevertheless, it was Renan's *Life of Jesus*, and a number of similar attempts to reduce Christ to a purely "historic Jesus," which first led me to comprehend how unbelievable it was that a man, with the slightest resemblance to any of these phantoms, could have inspired the friends who survived Him to anything as loyal as the Apostolic adventures in life and death.

Yet I was far then from believing that Christ was really God, revealed to a human world, and that the Church was the organism in which He remained to continue the work of salvation which He had finished on the Cross, coincident with the new generation. But, what I had apprehended before to a certain extent, and what I now saw more clearly, was the fact that the new religious systems, built upon either a godless basis or on humanity plus some kind of deism, were not in the least more scientifically established than the old religions. On the contrary, they were even to a greater degree built upon hypotheses and a matter of taste. Many of the accusations which I had uncritically allowed to enter into one ear, but unfortunately had not allowed to pass out of the other, were in reality loose accusations or speculations prompted by time or place. For example, I cannot say how many times I had heard that God was merely the wishful desire of the human heart, and that belief in existence after death, particularly, was dictated by an unseemly greediness for a portion of life longer than that which Nature found it suitable to allot to each of us. I now realized that the first accusation was like a knife which cuts both ways. It was difficult to believe

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the point (which I considered as proved without examining the evidence) that the historic Jesus was a religious genius whose intuition had led humanity's God-Idea many steps forward on the road of development. For all of us "development" was synonymous with "improvement," if we gave that matter any thought at all. I did not see of what interest it could possibly be to me that a young Jew, nineteen hundred years ago, had gone about assuring people that their sins were forgiven them, particularly when He said of Himself: "Which of you shall convict Me of sin?" He could not, therefore, have known from personal experience, how it feels to have done something against another which one would wish for all the world not to have done, nor what an agony it is to have disappointed one's own best intentions so badly that forgiveness of self seems almost impossible. I knew what it was to regret cruelty toward others, secret cowardice, indolence where indolence was unpardonable. Life, I may say, in accordance with my humanistic, private religion, had not resulted in a pleasant satisfaction with myself, unless — and that would have been most pitiful of all — I should have stooped to compare myself with others who apparently lived according to easier standards. I knew very well that my knowledge of their inner lives was too meager for me to judge them rightly, nor had they, so far as I could tell, paid any homage to my own moral ideas.

Si non est Deus, non est bonus. I did not know at that time that there were others who had said this long ago, but I was familiar with enough history to know that historic Christianity had preached a Jesus who could forgive all sins to all men, because He is God and Creator, and all our sins against ourselves or others are first and foremost sins against Him. He can forgive the sins because all power is given Him in heaven and on earth, even the power to transform our transgressions against

Sigrid Undset

had my own belief, although I really saw no necessity for any God at all if the sole purpose of His existence was to agree with my ideas of right and wrong, of honor and dishonor and to approve my ideals and my condemnations. Since these, I concluded, must be conformable to my nature and my upbringing, I felt that I should uphold them without constructing a God who should agree with me.

A God who as the exact Opposite (*den Absolutt Andre*), and at the same time One who could communicate with me, whose ways were not my ways, whose will — absolute and distinct — could be distinguished from my will, but who could lead me, at the same time, into His ways and attune my will to harmony with His will — that Being I was not yet bold enough to picture.

Those who talked to us in the name of Christianity had but used the divine name in order to justify their own processes of thought and their ideals. A great many of them had given up historic Christianity as something untenable, even though — owing to a purely sentimental attitude of mind — they could not forsake a viewpoint of life colored by Christianity. They had given up belief in Jesus Christ as God and Man, but continued to adore Jesus, the Son of the carpenter, as an ideal man, a human ideal. Dogma, truth, revealed from “beyond” and formulated in human language, they could not believe, but they did believe in religious intuition and religious genius in mankind.

I had absolutely no inclination toward the worship of Man, nor could I believe in another person's intuition, certainly not in One who said of Himself: “Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart,” yet who at the same time used language against His opponents which, to put it mildly, was arrogant — unless He who acted thus was more than a mere human genius. I started from



Sybil Muesel.

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I knew quite well that ladies in our circle were often guilty of things much more immoral than the misstep made by this poor servant girl. There came to mind the breaking of marriage vows, the running after men considered good parties whether or not they were unscrupulous in business and evil-minded. That virginity could have a positive value, could be a reservoir of strength, and not merely a negotiable asset in the marriage market, a minister of that intellectual milieu could hardly be expected to point out to us. It was considered something of a misfortune and something of a joke if a woman became an old maid. I had read what Luther wrote about virginity and it made me very anti-Lutheran. There were some things I had learned by attending Ragna Nielsen's school!

Yet I did not doubt at the time that the minister spoke to us in good faith, and that he was ready to suffer and make sacrifices for his unpleasant idea of God. On the other hand I was not minded to take his version of Christianity as more authentic than any of the others on which I had relied. His instruction for confirmation had made clear to me that I did not believe in the religion with which in my childhood and younger days I had fancied that I had some distant and vague connection. It was unfortunate that in the Protestantism I had learned to know, nearly every person who was religiously inclined had also his own personal conviction or his own independent conception of Christianity.

The God presented to us by our school instructors in religion was more acceptable than the Uranienborg God. He was human — genuinely human — but not more human than the noblest humanity I was able to imagine. He was wise, but not wise beyond human understanding. Like many other young persons brought up in a free-thought milieu, I had the impression that one's faith is a private matter, if not purely a matter of taste. I too

Enlightenment" was its motto — Wergeland and Björnson were its patron saints. I had and have great sympathy for many people who found in this tendency a goal for their idealism; a wish to serve their country, their sex, a certain class, or humanity as a whole. I had discovered, however, long before growing up, that people who called themselves liberal minded or radical, or in step with a new era, are most often extremely bigoted. To be bigoted does not consist in a man being convinced that his belief is right and another's belief is wrong, but in his having too little intelligence and imagination to be able to perceive that those who disagree with him can do so in good faith and complete honesty.

Certainly there was a great deal of bigotry in conservative circles at that time. In my younger days, the conservative was to me like a person of a foreign race. Those I met later, for instance during my office years, did not awaken any real desire on my part to know them better. I have the impression that they were easygoing souls and less bigoted.

The first to give me a rather comprehensive picture of the conservative viewpoint of life at that time was, by the way, the minister who confirmed me, and he made it intensely repulsive to me. I received the impression that, in this congregation at all events, God required (of the girls at least) nothing more than essentially negative virtues that might prove serviceable. I was especially annoyed when he went through the Sixth Commandment with us. He addressed his remarks to the girls from the Public School. He advised them against accepting "treats," warned them against men who might flirt with them on their free afternoons, and told a touching story of a young girl he visited in a hospital, where she lay ruined because of "a single kiss." I was shocked and thought: Really, the girl did not do anything so very sinful. On the contrary, it was the man's fault.

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Perhaps few converts, however, are able to explain their conversion; to tell how their opposition to One who called Himself the Way, the Truth, and the Life was overcome — an opposition dictated by fear and distrust. This necessarily calls for the aid of that mystical and supernatural power which theologians call “grace.” We can tell no more than our daily experiences, until a day came when we realized the injustice of our opposition. Man has a fundamental distrust of all authority which is purely of the earth, yet our human nature suffers from an incurable desire for some authority. We want teachers who can actually teach us, we want leaders who can give us orders and prohibitions, we want someone set over us on whom we can depend, and whom we can admire — yes, whom we can love. Even in my youth, it did not require an extremely sharp intelligence to discover this fact, although the world’s hunger for authority had not then taken the pathological form it has since assumed. So the question arises, do we long for authority because we are in reality created to bow before an Authority such as has the only legitimate right over us — a Creator’s right? The right of an *Auctor Vitae*?

“Think for yourself” was constantly said to the children in the school I attended. But when I followed this injunction as well as I could and my thinking resulted in something other than that which the teachers had intended me to think, I soon remarked that they became unpleasantly astonished. They saw nothing in my disagreement with them except a desire for opposition, naughtiness, or else that I had allowed myself to be influenced by the people who were stupid, ignorant, or untruthful, because they did not believe and think as did my teachers. The school principal was one of the first exponents of Woman’s Rights in our country, and the spirit of the school was pronouncedly “Left” since the close of the last century. “Freedom, Progress,

To be sure, the freedom of any dreamland is rather an illusion, for in reality the number of dream types and dream combinations is limited. Dream life is governed by laws in a higher degree than most people imagine. But what we do not know does not hurt us and so we imagine that it must imply a glorious freedom to transfer ourselves into a world whose system and quality we ourselves decide. But such is not the case in the reality into which we have been born, where the essential nature and property of things are fixed and bound by laws.

There is but one possible way for mankind, as we know it, to be free. Man must pick his way through a whole network of causes and concatenations, and his attempt often ends in an embarrassing entanglement which catches and holds him fast. In this world we can attain to only one kind of freedom, that to which our Lord refers when He says: "The Truth shall make you free." But even after a man has recognized the truth and by it is freed, so that the determining factors in life no longer hold him in chains, he cannot keep this freedom at a cheaper price than by an uninterrupted fight against the powers from which he has escaped, first and foremost, against the temptation to look back with longing eyes toward his old romantic dreamland, where two and two would be anything he wished, and where he himself could decide as to what that was to be.

It is intelligible enough in a way — this ingenuity of modern man to wrest himself free of the authority of the Church. We witness it in the continual efforts made by him to escape from whatever may hold any claim to authority. These efforts to avoid bondage and this fight against a Church which always has openly demanded the recognition of its authority is furthermore not peculiar to modern man. The same tendency exercised a great power even over the Jews in Jerusalem in the days before the Pasch, in the year of our Lord's crucifixion.

Irma di Lena

all precepts of the Church and have found great consolation in prayer, especially when I know that my husband, in his many travels by land and sea, is exposed to manifold dangers. My husband gives me a good example in many ways. Before every trip we pray together and before every sea voyage we have a Mass said for a safe journey. Even now, when for the sake of my children I no longer am able to accompany my husband, I feel certain that his religious fervor will help him to remain faithful to me and I in return resolve anew to live up to our faith till the end of my days.

BEYOND HUMAN LIMITATIONS

SIGRID UNDSET

IF ALL the converts who have returned to the Catholic Church were to describe their way to Rome, it would probably appear that no two have followed exactly the same path. We who have accepted the Church's claim to be "the pillar and ground of Truth" do not wonder that there are as many roads to it as there are minds.

When men so stubbornly hold fast to the hope that it will be impossible for mankind to find Absolute Truth, it is because they imagine that life would lose all its enchantment and there would be an end to our freedom, if a truth should really exist — a single truth, in which all the rest must be comprehended. If the rest cannot enter as parts of this truth, their falsity would be evident. At times, most of us have felt it intolerable that two times two must always be four. Yet it is on the acceptance of this tiresome dogma that the possibility of developing a great part of one's individual talents and accomplishments must rest. If a man retains his freedom to act and reckon on his personal conviction that two times two are five or nothing or seven, he must take the consequences. Among these are the reprisals of his fellow men when they regard it counter to their interests to settle accounts with him on the basis of such a subjective multiplication table.

Similarly, we all have experienced, at least as a passing mood, that longing for a dreamland where two times two are as much as we desire them to be at the moment.

Through Lover's Lane

baptized Catholic. Soon after, we again left Switzerland. My husband never went to work nor retired, without praying fervently with me, and since I remembered the Catholic prayers of my early childhood, I taught my child to lisp them as I had done years ago. The longer I lived with my husband the more determined I became to become a Catholic, convinced that the Catholic Faith was the only means of salvation.

A few years later — thanks to the goodness of God — I was at last to share this happiness with my husband. He had departed for Egypt with the agreement that I follow him some time later. I planned to spring a surprise on him by coming to him as a Catholic. For this reason I approached our pastor to make arrangements for taking instructions. However, he informed me that it would take six months and that it would be impossible to complete the course before the date of my scheduled departure. After my arrival in Egypt, therefore, we talked things over with a German Franciscan whom my husband had befriended. After an additional three months' instruction I was finally admitted to the Sacraments. My Reverend instructor, Father Cyriacus Michels, O.F.M., a widely traveled missionary, was not only an interesting instructor but also succeeded in dispelling all my doubts.

In the first part of December, 1929, I received conditional baptism in the sacristy of St. Joseph's Church, Cairo, Egypt. Two lady friends from Switzerland acted as sponsors. On the same day I made my first Confession and on the following day I received Holy Communion for the first time. My husband accompanied me to the rail and words fail me to describe what bliss and peace filled my soul. When shortly after the Bishop of Alexandria came to Cairo, I received the Sacrament of Confirmation, that I might henceforth fearlessly profess my faith.

Since my conversion I have faithfully complied with

Irma di Lena

Even after I reached maturity I had many Catholic friends with whom I occasionally visited Catholic churches. The evening services, conducted in May and October, buoyed my spirits in particular and I felt grieved that I could not enjoy all this as a Catholic. Still God guided me wonderfully and the year 1923 was to mark the beginning of my conversion.

At that time I became acquainted with my future husband, a member of the Catholic Kolping Society, who never missed Mass on Sunday nor his monthly Communion. My heart swelled with pride and joy whenever I saw him pass our home on Sunday on his way to the eight o'clock Mass. The thought that I could not accompany him filled my heart with sorrow. As soon as our friendship became a deep mutual affection my fiancé informed me candidly that he would consider a marriage only with the express understanding that all children resulting from the wedlock would be reared in the Catholic Faith. However, he likewise promised not to use coercion in any form to sway my religious conviction. I consented to the terms, promising to rear all children Catholic according to the best of my abilities. Our marriage took place in October, 1924, at the shrine of the Blessed Virgin in Maria Einsiedeln, Switzerland. The exhortation of the priest who performed the marriage ceremony was most beautiful and inspiring.

During the first years of our union we lived in various countries wherever business duties called my husband. We attended Mass jointly on Sundays and I felt grieved as often as I saw my husband approach the Communion rail because I could not accompany him. My husband, faithful to his promise, never discussed religion with me. In fact he repeatedly declared that a conversion on my part must be entirely voluntary and not be motivated by the desire to please him.

In 1926 God blessed our union with a boy who was

THROUGH LOVERS' LANE

IRMA DI LENA

THE first causes of my conversion may be traced back to the environmental influences of my childhood days. I was born as the first child of a mixed marriage in a good-sized town of Switzerland. Although my Protestant father permitted my mother full freedom of religious worship, he nevertheless insisted on the baptism of his children in the Protestant faith. Consequently I was baptized a Protestant. As soon as I began to speak, my mother taught me the usual Catholic prayers and likewise endeavored to give me a Catholic education as far as circumstances permitted. To my great delight our minister did not object to my attendance of religious classes with Catholic pupils during my first years at school. However, when our class was prepared for the first confession, my religious development unfortunately received a sudden jar and later a complete change.

The Catholic priest in whose parish limits our family resided demanded that I be rebaptized conditionally before being admitted to the Sacraments, but in this he met with stubborn resistance on the part of my father. Besides neglecting to give a plausible explanation for his demands, the priest aggravated the situation by imprudent remarks to such an extent that my mother also quit going to church from this day on. I do not maintain that my mother acted rightly in doing so, but at all events it was because of this episode that I was henceforth reared exclusively as a Protestant.

Franziska Van Leer

the command of Christ: "Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" found its fulfillment in my life! I became a child of the Church, of the Kingdom of God on earth, for which I had yearned so long and passionately. High above all these joys and graces stood, like a radiant sun, the white Host, Christ in the Blessed Eucharist, He the long-desired, unknown Messiah, the Redeemer, the King, the Lord, the God of Israel!

On this and all following days my prayers of thanksgiving were accompanied with the fervent plea which our Mother Church couches in the following words on Good Friday:

"Almighty, eternal God, who repellst not even Jewish faithlessness from Thy mercy, harken to our prayers which we make in behalf of the blindness of that people, that, recognizing the light of Thy truth, which is Christ, they may be delivered from their darkness."

From The Synagogue To The Messiah

which nevertheless revealed itself to me, and attracted me with irresistible force. I also wanted to receive as the rest. I hurried into the monastery; pleaded with Father to at least give me that "white substance" if he did not want to baptize me. Naturally, he remained adamant to all my pleadings. He instructed me briefly on the Holy Eucharist with the result that my hunger became more intense.

Finally Father said: "I shall bring you a Dutch priest, a countryman. He will refer you to a priest in Holland to whom you may go." "No," I remonstrated vehemently, "I need no Holland priest. Bring me the priest who distributed the 'white particles,' he will not refuse me this grace." With a shake of the head Father left me in order to fetch the Holland priest. He could scarcely have guessed the priest I requested since a different one distributed Communion every fifteen minutes. And after all, which priest would baptize me without preparation?

However, once more Providence came to my rescue. When the door of the parlor opened again, I recognized to my great surprise the priest whom I had seen distributing Holy Communion in church. He was a Hollander. Our conversation was very brief. In reply to his question what I wished, I answered "Baptism." Thinking that I had already been instructed and merely desired to be baptized by a Dutch priest, he made no objection. Without intent to practise deception, I made no mention of the fact that I had not as yet been instructed, and Divine Providence permitted that this Dutch priest found out only after two days that my knowledge of the Catholic Faith was very meager.

Developments followed swiftly. On June 13, 1919, I made the acquaintance of the Dutch priest, Fr. Laetus Himmelreich, O.F.M.; on the 15th I was baptized, and on the 16th I had to leave Germany in accordance with the eviction decree. On the Feast of the Blessed Trinity

Franziska Van Leer

Franz Werfel, the author of *Paul Among the Jews*, lets the Apostle Paul answer the questions of Gamaliel, why he became a believer in Christ, with the words: "How can I speak of Him? How can I speak of the moment when the light of heaven gushed into my blood, when I came blind into a new world? My heart is rent asunder when I think of it. Can a man speak of the moment of his birth?"

Human words fail to describe the light, which the Church calls grace, and which suddenly falls into the darkness of an erring and benighted soul. It would seem like a profanation were I to attempt to portray how the shining truth of the Divinity of Christ took possession of my soul. I asked Father Holzapfel for baptism. At once! I was refused on the grounds that my knowledge was insufficient. But I did not wish to wait after I had discovered the Truth, and realized that the Church was the long-sought and ardently desired kingdom of God, which wants to embrace all people and nations, just as the Prophets foretold. I grew despondent on account of the delay, but Divine Providence came to my rescue.

Since I had retained my Dutch citizenship, I was expelled from the country. In fact, all foreigners were evicted at that time. However, a return to Holland, to my family, would have made my conversion impossible. Therefore, I wished to receive Baptism and the other sacraments by all means prior to my eviction, for then nobody could rob me of them. Nothing, however, could induce the experienced Father to baptize me. He insisted that I return to Holland and take instructions there.

In my despair I went to the Franciscan church early in the morning, just at the distribution of Holy Communion. A "Power went forth from Him, which healed all." It touched also my poor and aching heart. I saw the people approaching the rail and my soul hungered after the white substance whose name I knew not, but

From The Synagogue To The Messiah

night I was locked in an underground vault of the castle where I had been on trial, for the prisons were overcrowded.

This night was the most memorable of my life. I had not as yet been sentenced, but there seemed slim chances of acquittal. The guards spoke about me as if I were already doomed to die before the firing squad. I was convinced that this night was my last and began making a balance account of my life. I realized that it was imperfect and incomplete. This could not be the end of the road, for I had not yet found Truth and Peace, and the Kingdom of God. But where could I find these?

In my utter despair, I sent an ultimatum to God. If He existed, He could not let me die without having found Him. If I should die the next day, I would know that God did not exist, for in that case, my life would have been senseless and to no purpose. However, if I should live and find release, I would know that God existed, and thus He might reveal His will to me and accept my unconditional surrender to Him.

The next morning I was set free. I have never seen the legal records of my trial, and for this reason am unable to determine on what ground and by whom I was liberated. More important than the natural causes of my release is the supernatural effect: my conversion.

It is impossible to describe how God broke my obstinate will which revolted against being baptized. I was willing to do everything for God apart from becoming a Catholic. The prejudice of my Jewish past, but also ignorance of everything pertaining to the Catholic Faith and Church, such as a total misconception of the words *grace* and *redemption*, held me back. A few books of Father Heribert Holzapfel, O.F.M., showed me finally with convincing arguments that the ultimate conclusion to be drawn from the Gospels must be baptism, because "Christ is God."

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bread with hard labor. I would have liked to preach, to teach the Gospel to the people, but who would hear me? Perhaps good example was sufficient.

Still I felt my impotency to change the world, but at last I decided "to do something about it." I wrote a letter to the German Emperor requesting an audience. I wished to induce him to make peace at once with all available means. It was in August, 1918. In order to be certain that my letter would reach its destination, I asked a princess to transmit the same. A polite, but declining answer from the Emperor was the result. "Now a revolution will come," I remarked to the princess. I saw no other way out of the dilemma. On November 9 the revolution broke out. The leaders of the revolt seemed to me at first to be messengers of salvation and peace. However, I was disappointed in my expectations. The people and the world remained unchanged.

The tide of affairs now tore me along. I hoped to be a mediator in the strife, to bring about peace and understanding, but all attempts were of no avail. In Munich, where I lived among the radicals at this time, Eisner was murdered. A reign of terror followed. When the white troops entered the city in May, 1919, to liberate Munich, I knew that I would face arrest. I had been living in close quarters with the revolutionary leaders, and was bound to be considered an accomplice. As expected, I was arrested at once and was subjected to a cross examination for five hours.

Apparently the authorities were baffled in my case. I spoke continuously about the Gospels, about world peace, about Parsifal, and the Prophets. One of the interrogators asked why I did not become a Christian if I was convinced of the Gospels. I laughed to his face. "Those few drops of water cannot change a person. Christ was a Jew as I am. I shall never become a Christian, if I am not one already in sentiment." It was 10 o'clock p.m. For the

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a piece of it, but where was the "undivided, seamless garment" to be found?

I did not know that nineteen hundred years ago somebody had already raised the question, "What is Truth?" while Truth in the person of the God-Man stood before him, for I was not acquainted with the Gospels. As a child I had not been permitted to read them, and now I did not care to read them, for I took them to be legends.

Thus I groped in the darkness of earthly wisdom, and when men had no answer to my queries, I took recourse to the stars, astrology. But here I saw merely the grimace of an inescapable fate which excluded the freedom of the will, grace and redemption.

So dense had the darkness to grow in and around me, till God let the light shine into the darkness, "the Light which illumines every man coming into this world," the light to which 1900 years ago my people had closed their eyes in a blind obstinacy, which still holds them captives to the present day.

The Passion of St. Matthew! I had often heard this great opus of Bach. I had wept over the suffering, loving Christ, without Him being anything else to me but a mythical figure like Parsifal.

Then, in 1918, I read the works of Tolstoi, in particular his *Diary* and *My Gospel*. Here Christ became a human reality. He was of flesh and blood, had words of peace, of love, as no one before Him. In this way He could be my ideal, as Tolstoi intended. Yet, I revered Him merely as a perfect man, not as God.

O how long is the path which leads from the veneration to the adoration of Christ! No man can tread it without God's grace! How far was I still away from faith!

After reading Tolstoi, I was determined to carry out literally what the Gospels enjoined. I gave away all my belongings, as Tolstoi suggested, in order to enter the service of a peasant in whose employ I could earn my

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häuser, Elizabeth; in the *Nibelungenring*, even the gods are made to atone for sin, since no one offers to sacrifice himself. But *Parsifal*, which I saw in the course of years quite frequently, was the most gripping experience of all, since he seemed the very prototype of the Redeemer.

Nevertheless, the gulf between God and man, life and religion, science and faith, Church and world, seemed too vast to span. I did, however, for a long time consider art the connecting link between God and man, and labored in the service of this "mediator." I attempted in word and writing to convince people of the beauty of modern painting, plastic, music, and architecture. But the war with its dire consequences soon paralyzed my activities. And how was it possible to believe in the Messiah, in a kingdom of God, a kingdom of peace, while precisely the opposite of that happened which the prophets and Parsifal glorified? Not swords were forged into plows, but plows into swords, yea, even church bells were converted into armor.

I wished to heal wounds, to become a Red Cross nurse, but I could not see others suffer; for I had no answer to the despondent query of the dying. Why suffering? why war? why death? I had lost my faith and was unable to inspire hope in others without lying.

All this made me withdraw from the world. I read and studied, pored over books of all times and peoples to find an answer to those questions which no event had brought so to the foreground as the World War. Whence did man come? Whither is he going? Why is he on earth? What is the meaning of sorrow?

But nowhere did I find a satisfactory comprehensive answer. I knew that the sages of all ages had worried themselves with these same problems. Some had tried to find an answer in religion, some in sociology, and others had tried a practical solution. However, the "garment of Truth" was rent in parts, everybody seemed to have

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of the coming of God's Kingdom on earth, when the Messiah would rule, when the wolf should dwell with the lamb, and the people would convert their swords into ploughshares, for no people would any longer rise against another, and a small child would lead them filled my young soul with great yearning for the coming Redeemer (Isa. 2 and 11).

During religious instructions and also at home, I often asked when all this would come to pass, but no one could give me a satisfactory answer. At times I began to doubt the truths of the prophecies since the answers of my parents and teachers were not only vague, but contradicted each other. One answer was: "The Messiah will come on the clouds as Judge"; another, "He will be born as Man"; a third, "The Messiah is neither God nor man, but a period of time"; and lastly, "If peace rules, this is the Messiah."

Since compliance with the burdensome Mosaic Law seemed to bring neither my people nor me closer to the time of the promised Redeemer, I cast off the yoke of the law at the age of eighteen, in order to become free. I left home and instead of attending high school as my father wished, I hoped to make a living as an office girl in foreign countries. I wanted to be independent, and to follow my own will and whims.

However, life disappointed me very much, but I was too proud to admit it. In order to forget my grief, I frequently sought distraction in the theater. The operas of Wagner impressed me most profoundly, especially since practically the same theme, a yearning for redemption, which is to be found in the writings of the prophets, finds its expression in a related manner in the Wagnerian melodies. Here I saw people ensnared in sin, and in each instance, there came one to redeem them through sacrifice. In the opera *Hollander* Senta sacrifices himself; in *Lohengrin*, the knight; in *Tann-*

FROM THE SYNAGOGUE TO THE MESSIAH

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THE Thora redeemed me not. She cursed me with the knowledge that I was a sinner." — Werfel, *Paul Among the Jews*.

"Do not think that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill" (Matt. 5:17).

My way from the synagogue to the Church is another proof for the truth of the words of Christ. Even though the road I chose often ended in a blind alley, God's grace called me back each time that I might not miss the goal at the end.

I was born of Jewish parents in Amsterdam, in the year 1892, and attended religious instructions at a very early age. I also studied Hebrew in order to be able to read the Sacred Scriptures. My mother was very pious. She reared me according to the strict customs of the Mosaic Law, and I not only got to know but also to love the customs and religious cult as prescribed by our belief.

The books of Moses which were read on the Sabbath in the Synagogue interested and captivated me, since they contained the history of my people, the chosen people of God. My mother also taught me to be grateful for my Jewish extraction and membership among God's people.

Even more than the books of Moses, I liked the prophetic books of the Old Testament, from which also passages were read on the Sabbath. The description